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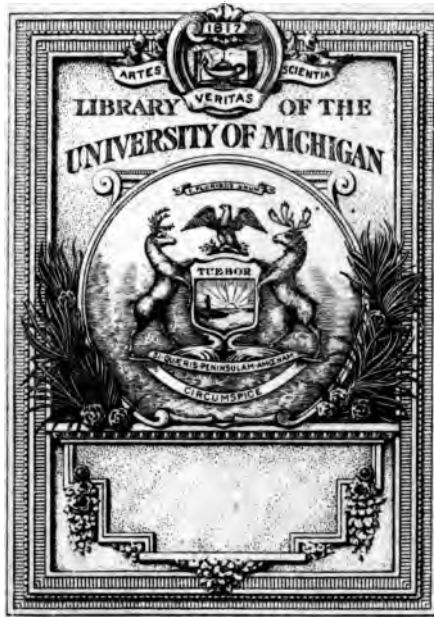
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THE NEW POETRY
* * *
AN ANTHOLOGY





THE NEW POETRY



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THE NEW POETRY

AN ANTHOLOGY

EDITED BY
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AND
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EDITORS OF POETRY

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INTRODUCTION

During the last three or four years there has been a remarkable renaissance of poetry in both America and England, and an equally extraordinary revival of public interest in the art.

The editors of this anthology wish to present in convenient form representative work of the poets who are to-day creating what is commonly called "the new poetry,"—a phrase no doubt rash and most imperfectly descriptive, since the new in art is always the elder old, but one difficult to replace with any form of words more exact. Much newspaper controversy, and a number of special magazines, testify to the demand for such a book; also many letters to the editors of *Poetry* asking for information—letters not only from individual lovers of the art, but also from college professors and literary clubs or groups, who have begun to feel that the poetry of to-day is a vital force no longer to be ignored. Indeed, many critics feel that poetry is coming nearer than either the novel or the drama to the actual life of to-day. The magazine *Poetry*, ever since its foundation in October, 1912, has encouraged this new spirit in the art, and the anthology is a further effort on the part of its editors to present the new spirit to the public.

What is the new poetry? and wherein does it differ from the old? The difference is not in mere details of form, for much poetry infused with the new spirit conforms to the old measures and rhyme-schemes. It is not merely in diction, though the truly modern poet rejects the so-called "poetic" shifts of language—the *deems*, *'neath*s, *forsooth*s, etc., the inversions and high-sounding rotundities, familiar to his predecessors: all the rhetorical excesses through which most Victorian poetry now seems "over-apparelled," as a speaker at a *Poetry* dinner—a lawyer, not a poet—put it in pointing out what the new movement is aiming at. These things are important, but the difference goes deeper than details of form, strikes through them to fundamental integrities.

The new poetry strives for a concrete and immediate realization of life; it would discard the theory, the abstraction, the remoteness, found in all classics not of the first order. It is less vague, less verbose, less eloquent, than most poetry of the Victorian period and much work of earlier periods. It has set before itself an ideal of absolute simplicity and sincerity—an ideal which implies an individual, unstereotyped diction; and an individual, unstereotyped rhythm. Thus inspired, it becomes intensive rather than diffuse. It looks out more eagerly than in; it becomes objective. The term “exteriority” has been applied to it, but this is incomplete. In presenting the concrete object or the concrete environment, whether these be beautiful or ugly, it seeks to give more precisely the emotion arising from them, and thus widens immeasurably the scope of the art.

All this implies no disrespect for tradition. The poets of to-day do not discard tradition because they follow the speech of to-day rather than that of Shakespeare’s time, or strive for organic rhythm rather than use a mold which has been perfected by others. On the contrary, they follow the great tradition when they seek a vehicle suited to their own epoch and their own creative mood, and resolutely reject all others.

Great poetry has always been written in the language of contemporary speech, and its theme, even when legendary, has always borne a direct relation with contemporary thought, contemporary imaginative and spiritual life. It is this direct relation which the more progressive modern poets are trying to restore. In this effort they discard not only archaic diction but also the shop-worn subjects of past history or legend, which have been through the centuries a treasure-trove for the second-rate.

This effort at modern speech, simplicity of form, and authentic vitality of theme, is leading our poets to question the authority of the accepted laws of English verse, and to study other languages, ancient and modern, in the effort to find out what poetry really is. It is a strange fact that, in the common prejudice of cultivated people during the four centuries from just before 1400 to just before 1800, nothing was accepted as poetry in English that did not

walk in the iambic measure. Bits of Elizabethan song and of Dryden's two musical odes, both beating four-time instead of the iambic three, were outlandish intrusions too slight to count. To write English poetry, a man must measure his paces according to the iambic foot-rule; and he must mark off his lines with rhymes, or at least marshal them in the pentameter movement of blank verse.

The first protest against this prejudice, which long usage had hardened into law, came in the persons of four or five great poets—Burns, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron—who puzzled the ears of their generation with anapæsts and other four-time measures, and who carried into their work a certain immediacy of feeling and imagery—a certain modern passion of life—which even Cowper, Thompson and a few others of their time, though they had written of things around them, had scarcely attained. Quarterly critics and London moralists blinked and gasped, but at last the bars had to go down for these great radicals. And before long the extreme virtuosity of Swinburne had widened still further the musical range of the English language.

By the time Whitman appeared, the ear of the average reader—that formidable person—was attuned to anapæsts, dactyls, choriambics, sapphics, rhymed or unrhymed. He could not call them by name, but he was docile to all possible intricacies of pattern in any closely woven metrical scheme. But Whitman gave him a new shock. Here was a so-called poet who discarded all traditional patterns, and wove a carpet of his own. Once more the conservatives protested: was this poetry? and, if so, why? If poetry was not founded on the long-accepted metrical laws, then how could they distinguish it from prose, and thus keep the labels and catalogues in order? What was Whitman's alleged poetry but a kind of freakish prose, invented to set forth a dangerous anarchistic philosophy?

It would take too long to analyze the large rhythms of Whitman's free verse; but the mere fact that he wrote free verse and called it poetry, and that other poets—men like Rossetti, Swinburne, Symonds, even the reluctant Emerson—seemed to agree that it was poetry, this fact alone was, in the opinion of the con-

servatives, a challenge to four centuries of English poets. And this challenge, repeated by later poets, compels us to inquire briefly into the origins of English poetry, in the effort to get behind and underneath the instinctive prejudice that English poetry, to be poetry, must conform to prescribed metres.

Chaucer, great genius that he was, an aristocrat by birth and breeding, and a democrat by feeling and sympathy—Chaucer may have had it in his power to turn the whole stream of English poetry into either the French or the Anglo-Saxon channel. Knowing and loving the old French epics better than the Norse sagas, he naturally chose the French channel, and he was so great and so beloved that his world followed him. Thus there was no longer any question—the iambic measure and rhyme, both dear to the French-trained ears of England's Norman masters, became fixed as the standard type of poetic form.

But it was possibly a toss-up—the scale hung almost even in that formative fourteenth century. If Chaucer's contemporary Langland—the great democrat, revolutionist, mystic—had had Chaucer's authority and universal sympathy, English poetry might have followed his example instead of Chaucer's; and Shakespeare, Milton and the rest might have been impelled by common practice to use—or modify—the curious, heavy, alliterative measure of *Piers Ploughman*, which now sounds so strange to our ears:

In a somer seson,
When softe was the sonne,
I shoop me into shroudes
As I a sheep weere;
In habite as an heremite
Unholy of werkes,
Wente wide in this world
Wondres to here.

Though we must rejoice that Chaucer prevailed with his French forms, Langland reminds us that poetry—even English poetry—is older than rhyme, older than the iambic measure, older than all the metrical patterns which now seem so much a part of it. If our criticism is to have any value, it must insist upon the obvious truth

that poetry existed before the English language began to form itself out of the débris of other tongues, and that it now exists in forms of great beauty among many far-away peoples who never heard of our special rules.

Perhaps the first of these disturbing influences from afar to be felt in modern English poetry was the Celtic renaissance, the wonderful revival of interest in old Irish song, which became manifest in translations and adaptations of the ancient Gaelic lyrics and epics, made by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde and others.

This influence was most powerful because it came to us directly, not at second-hand, through the English work of two poets of genius, Synge and Yeats. These great men, fortified and inspired by the simplicity and clarity of primitive Celtic song, had little patience with the "over-appareled" art of Tennyson and his imitators. They found it stiffened by rhetoric, by a too conscious morality leading to pulpit eloquence, and by second-hand bookish inspirations; and its movement they found hampered, thwarted of freedom, by a too slavish acceptance of ready-made schemes of metre and rhyme. The surprises and irregularities, found in all great art because they are inherent in human feeling, were being ruled out of English poetry, which consequently was stiffening into forms too fixed and becoming more and more remote from life. As Mr. Yeats said in Chicago:

"We were weary of all this. We wanted to get rid not only of rhetoric but of poetic diction. We tried to strip away everything that was artificial, to get a style like speech, as simple as the simplest prose, like a cry of the heart."

It is scarcely too much to say that "the new poetry"—if we may be allowed the phrase—began with these two great Irish masters. Think what a contrast to even the simplest lyrics of Tennyson the pattern of their songs presents, and what a contrast their direct outright human feeling presents to the somewhat culture-developed optimism of Browning, and the science-inspired pessimism of Arnold. Compared with these Irishmen the best of their predecessors seem literary. This statement does not imply any measure of ultimate values, for it is still too early to estimate

them. One may, for example, believe Synge to be the greatest poet-playwright in English since Shakespeare, and one of the great poets of the world; but a few more decades must pass before such ranking can have authority.

At the same time other currents were influencing progressive minds toward even greater freedom of form. Strangely enough, Whitman's influence was felt first in France. It reached England, and finally America, indirectly from Paris, where the poets, stimulated by translations of the great American, especially Bajazette's, and by the ever-adventurous quality of French scholarship, have been experimenting with free verse ever since Mallarmé. The great Irish poets felt the French influence—it was part of the education which made them realize that English poetry had become narrow, rigid, and insular. Yeats has held usually, though never slavishly, to rhyme and a certain regularity of metrical form—in which, however, he makes his own tunes; but Synge wrote his plays in that wide borderland between prose and verse, in a form which, whatever one calls it, is essentially poetry, for it has passion, glamour, magic, rhythm, and glorious imaginative life.

This borderland between prose and verse is being explored now as never before in English; except, perhaps in the King James translation of the Bible. The modern "vers-libertines," as they have been wittily called, are doing pioneer work in an heroic effort to get rid of obstacles that have hampered the poet and separated him from his audience. They are trying to make the modern manifestations of poetry less a matter of rules and formulæ, and more a thing of the spirit, and of organic as against imposed, rhythm. In this enthusiastic labor they are following not only a strong inward impulse, not only the love of freedom which Chaucer followed—and Spenser and Shakespeare, Shelley and Coleridge and all the masters—but they are moved also by influences from afar. They have studied the French *symbolistes* of the 'nineties, and the more recent Parisian *vers-libristes*. Moreover, some of them have listened to the pure lyricism of the Provençal troubadours, have studied the more elaborate mechanism of early Italian sonneteers and canzonists, have read Greek poetry from a

new angle of vision; and last, but perhaps most important of all, have bowed to winds from the East.

In the nineteenth century the western world—the western æsthetic world—discovered the orient. Someone has said that when Perry knocked at the gates of Japan, these opened, not to let us in, but to let the Japanese out. Japanese graphic art, especially, began almost at once to kindle progressive minds. Whistler, of course, was the first great creative artist to feel the influence of their instinct for balance and proportion, for subtle harmonies of color and line, for the integrity of beauty in art as opposed to the moralizing and sentimental tendencies which had been intruding more and more.

Poetry was slower than the graphic arts to feel the oriental influence, because of the barrier of language. But European scholarship had long dabbled with Indian, Persian and Sanskrit literatures, and Fitzgerald even won over the crowd to some remote suspicion of their beauty by meeting Omar half-way, and making a great poem out of the marriage, not only of two minds, but of two literary traditions. Then a few airs from Japan blew in—a few translations of *hokku* and other forms—which showed the stark simplicity and crystal clarity of the art among Japanese poets. And of late the search has gone further: we begin to discover a whole royal line of Chinese poets of a thousand or more years ago; and we are trying to search out the secrets of their delicate and beautiful art. The task is difficult, because our poets, ignorant of Chinese, have to get at these masters through the literal translations of scholars. But even by this round-about way, poets like Allen Upward, Ezra Pound, Helen Waddell and a few others, give us something of the rare flavor, the special exquisite perfume, of the original. And of late the Indian influence has been emphasized by the great Bengali poet and sage, Rabindranath Tagore, whose mastery of English makes him a poet in two languages.

This oriental influence is to be welcomed because it flows from deep original streams of poetic art. We should not be afraid to learn from it; and in much of the work of the imagists, and other radical groups, we find a more or less conscious, and more or less

effective, yielding to that influence. We find something of the oriental directness of vision and simplicity of diction, also now and then a hint of the unobtrusive oriental perfection of form and delicacy of feeling.

All these influences, which tend to make the art of poetry, especially poetry in English, less provincial, more cosmopolitan, are by no means a defiance of the classic tradition. On the contrary, they are an endeavor to return to it at its great original sources, and to sweep away artificial laws—the *obiter dicta* of secondary minds—which have encumbered it. There is more of the great authentic classic tradition, for example, in the *Spoon River Anthology* than in the *Idylls of the King*, *Balaustian's Adventure*, and *Sohrab and Rustum* combined. And the free rhythms of Whitman, Mallarmé, Pound, Sandburg and others, in their inspired passages, are more truly in line with the biblical, the Greek, the Anglo-Saxon, and even the Shakespearean tradition, than all the exact iambics of Dryden and Pope, the patterned alexandrines of Racine, or the closely woven metrics of Tennyson and Swinburne.

Whither the new movement is leading no one can tell with exactness, nor which of its present manifestations in England and America will prove permanently valuable. But we may be sure that the movement is toward greater freedom of spirit and form, and a more enlightened recognition of the international scope, the cosmopolitanism, of the great art of poetry, of which the English language, proud as its record is, offers but a single phase. As part of such a movement, even the most extravagant experiments, the most radical innovations, are valuable, for the moment at least, as an assault against prejudice. And some of the radicals of to-day will be, no doubt, the masters of to-morrow—a phenomenon common in the history of the arts.

It remains only to explain the plan of this anthology, its inclusions and omissions.

It has seemed best to include no poems published before 1900, even though, as in a few cases, the poets were moved by the new impulses. For example, those two intensely modern, nobly im-

passioned, lyric poets, Emily Dickinson and the Shropshire Lad (Alfred Edward Housman)—the one dead, the other fortunately still living—both belong, by date of publication, to the 'nineties. The work of poets already, as it were, enshrined—whether by fame, or death, or both—has also not been quoted: poets whose works are already, in a certain sense, classics, and whose books are treasured by all lovers of the art—like Synge and Moody and Riley, too early gone from us, and William Butler Yeats, whose later verse is governed, even more than his earlier, by the new austerities.

Certain other omissions are more difficult to explain, because they may be thought to imply a lack of consideration which we do not feel. The present Laureate, Robert Bridges, even in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, was led by his own personal taste, especially in his *Shorter Poems*, toward austere simplicity of subject, diction and style. But his most representative poems were written before 1900. Rudyard Kipling has been inspired at times by the modern muse, but his best poems also antedate 1900. This is true also of Louise Imogen Guiney and Bliss Carman, though most of their work, like that of Arthur Symonds and the late Stephen Phillips and Anna Hempstead Branch, belongs, by its affinities, to the earlier period. And Alfred Noyes, whatever the date of his poems, bears no immediate relation to the more progressive modern movement in the art.

On the other hand, we have tried to be hospitable to the adventurous, the experimental, because these are the qualities of pioneers, who look forward, not backward, and who may lead on, further than we can see as yet, to new domains of the ever-conquering spirit of beauty.

H. M.

NOTE. A word about the typography of this volume. No rigid system of lineation, indention, etc., has been imposed upon the poets who very kindly lend us their work. For example, sonnets are printed with or without indention according to the individual preference of the poet; also other rhymed forms, such as quatrains rhyming alternately; as well as various forms of free verse. Punctuation and spelling are more uniform, although a certain liberty has been conceded in words like gray or grey, the color of which seems to vary with the spelling, and in the use of dots, dashes, commas, colons, etc.

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THE NEW POETRY

THE NEW POETRY

Conrad Aiken

MUSIC I HEARD

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread.
Now that I am without you, all is desolate,
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, beloved:
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes.
And in my heart they will remember always:
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise!

DEAD CLEOPATRA

Dead Cleopatra lies in a crystal casket,
Wrapped and spiced by the cunningest of hands.
Around her neck they have put a golden necklace
Her tatbebs, it is said, are worn with sands.

Dead Cleopatra was once revered in Egypt—
Warm-eyed she was, this princess of the south.
Now she is very old and dry and faded,
With black bitumen they have sealed up her mouth.

THE NEW POETRY

Grave-robbers pulled the gold rings from her fingers,
 Despite the holy symbols across her breast;
 They scared the bats that quietly whirled above her.
 Poor lady! she would have been long since at rest

If she had not been wrapped and spiced so shrewdly,
 Preserved, obscene, to mock black flights of years.
 What would her lover have said, had he foreseen it?
 Had he been moved to ecstasy, or tears?

O sweet clean earth from whom the green blade cometh!—
 When we are dead, my best-beloved and I,
 Close well above us that we may rest forever,
 Sending up grass and blossoms to the sky.

DANCING ADAIRS

Behold me, in my chiffon, gauze and tinsel,
 Flitting out of the shadow into the spotlight,
 And into the shadow again, without a whisper!—
 Firefly's my name, I am evanescent.

Firefly's your name. You are evanescent.
 But I follow you as remorselessly as darkness,
 And shut you in and enclose you, at last, and always,
 Till you are lost, as a voice is lost in silence.

Till I am lost, as a voice is lost in silence. . . .
 Are you the one who would close so cool about me?
 My fire sheds into and through you and beyond you:
 How can your fingers hold me? I am elusive.

How can my fingers hold you? You are elusive?
 Yes, you are flame; but I surround and love you,
 Always extend beyond you, cool, eternal,
 To take you into my heart's great void of silence.

You shut me into your heart's great void of silence. . . .
 O sweet and soothing end for a life of whirling!
 Now I am still, whose life was mazed with motion.
 Now I sink into you, for love of sleep.

Zoë Akins

THE TRAGEDIENNE

A storm is riding on the tide;
 Grey is the day and grey the tide,
 Far-off the sea-gulls wheel and cry—
 A storm draws near upon the tide;

A city lifts its minarets
 To winds that from the desert sweep,
 And prisoned Arab women weep
 Below the domes and minarets;

Upon a hill in Thessaly
 Stand broken columns in a line
 About a cold forgotten shrine,
 Beneath a moon in Thessaly:

But in the world there is no place
 So desolate as your tragic face.

I AM THE WIND

I am the wind that wavers,
 You are the certain land;
 I am the shadow that passes
 Over the sand.

THE NEW POETRY

I am the leaf that quivers,
You the unshaken tree;
You are the stars that are steadfast,
I am the sea.

You are the light eternal—
Like a torch I shall die;
You are the surge of deep music,
I but a cry!

CONQUERED

O pale! O vivid! dear!
O disillusioned eyes
Forever near!
O Dream, arise!

I will not turn away
From the face I loved again;
Your beauty may sway
My life with pain.

I will drink the wine you pour,
I will seek to put asunder
Our ways no more—
O Love! O Wonder!

THE WANDERER

The ships are lying in the bay,
The gulls are swinging round their spars;
My soul as eagerly as they
Desires the margin of the stars.

So much do I love wandering,
So much I love the sea and sky,
That it will be a piteous thing
In one small grave to lie.

Richard Aldington

THE POPLAR

Why do you always stand there shivering
Between the white stream and the road?

The people pass through the dust
On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars;
The waggoners go by at dawn;
The lovers walk on the grass path at night.

Stir from your roots, walk, poplar!
You are more beautiful than they are.

I know that the white wind loves you,
Is always kissing you and turning up
The white lining of your green petticoat.
The sky darts through you like blue rain,
And the grey rain drips on your flanks
And loves you.

And I have seen the moon
Slip his silver penny into your pocket
As you straightened your hair;
And the white mist curling and hesitating
Like a bashful lover about your knees.

I know you, poplar;
I have watched you since I was ten.
But if you had a little real love,
A little strength,
You would leave your nonchalant idle lovers
And go walking down the white road
Behind the waggoners.

There are beautiful beeches
Down beyond the hill.
Will you always stand there shivering?

LESBIA

Grow weary if you will, let me be sad.
Use no more speech now;
Let the silence spread gold hair above us,
Fold on delicate fold.
Use no more speech;
You had the ivory of my life to carve. . . .

And Picus of Mirandola is dead;
And all the gods they dreamed and fabled of,
Hermes, and Thoth and Bêl are rotten now,
Rotten and dank.

And through it all I see your pale Greek face;
Tenderness
Makes me eager as a little child to love you,
You morsel left half-cold on Cæsar's plate.

IMAGES

I

Like a gondola of green scented fruits
Drifting along the dank canals at Venice,
You, O exquisite one,
Have entered my desolate city.

II

The blue smoke leaps
Like swirling clouds of birds vanishing.
So my love leaps forth towards you,
Vanishes and is renewed.

III

A rose-yellow moon in a pale sky
When the sunset is faint vermillion
In the mist among the tree-boughs,
Art thou to me.

IV

As a young beech-tree on the edge of a forest
Stands still in the evening,
Yet shudders through all its leaves in the light air
And seems to fear the stars—
So are you still and so tremble.

V

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine trees.
And my desires have run with them.

VI

The flower which the wind has shaken
Is soon filled again with rain;
So does my mind fill slowly with misgiving
Until you return.

CHORICOS

The ancient songs
Pass deathward mournfully.

Cold lips that sing no more, and withered wreaths,
Regretful eyes and drooping breasts and wings —
Symbols of ancient songs
Mournfully passing
Down to the great white surges,
Watched of none
Save the frail sea-birds

And the lithe pale girls,
Daughters of Okeanos.

And the songs pass
From the green land
Which lies upon the waves as a leaf
On the flowers of hyacinth;
And they pass from the waters,
The manifold winds and the dim moon,
And they come,
Silently winging through soft Kimmerian dusk,
To the quiet level lands
That she keeps for us all,
That she wrought for us all for sleep
In the silver days of the earth's dawning-
Prosperine, daughter of Zeus.

And we turn from the Kuprian's breasts,
And we turn from thee,
Phoibos Apollon,
And we turn from the music of old
And the hills that we loved and the meads,
And we turn from the fiery day,
And the lips that were over-sweet;
For silently
Brushing the fields with red-shod feet,
With purple robe
Searing the flowers as with a sudden flame,
Death,
Thou hast come upon us.

And of all the ancient songs
Passing to the swallow-blue halls
By the dark streams of Persephone,
This only remains:
That in the end we turn to thee,

Death,
That we turn to thee, singing
One last song.

O Death,
Thou art an healing wind
That blowest over white flowers
A-tremble with dew;
Thou art a wind flowing
Over long leagues of lonely sea;
Thou art the dusk and the fragrance;
Thou art the lips of love mournfully smiling;
Thou art the pale peace of one
Sate with old desires;
Thou art the silence of beauty,
And we look no more for the morning;
We yearn no more for the sun,
Since with thy white hands,
Death,
Thou crownest us with the pallid chaplets,
The slim colorless poppies
Which in thy garden alone
Softly thou gatherest.

And silently;
And with slow feet approaching;
And with bowed head and unlit eyes,
We kneel before thee:
And thou, leaning towards us,
Caressingly layest upon us
Flowers from thy thin cold hands,
And, smiling as a chaste woman
Knowing love in her heart,
Thou sealest our eyes
And the illimitable quietude
Comes gently upon us.

Mary Aldis**BARBERRIES**

You say I touch the barberries
As a lover his mistress?
What a curious fancy!
One must be delicate, you know—
They have bitter thorns.
You say my hand is hurt?
Oh no, it was my breast,
It was crushed and pressed.
I mean—why yes, of course, of course—
There is a bright drop—isn't there?—
Right on my finger;
Just the color of a barberry,
But it comes from my heart.

Do you love barberries?
In the autumn
When the sun's desire
Touches them to a glory of crimson and gold?
I love them best then.
There is something splendid about them:
They are not afraid
Of being warm and glad and bold;
They flush joyously,
Like a cheek under a lover's kiss;
They bleed cruelly
Like a dagger wound in the breast;
They flame up madly for their little hour,
Knowing they must die.
Do you love barberries?

WHEN YOU COME

"There was a girl with him for a time. She took him to her room when he was desolate and warmed him and took care of him. One day he could not find her. For many weeks he walked constantly in that locality in search of her."—From *Life of Francis Thompson*.

When you come tonight
To our small room
You will look and listen—
I shall not be there.

You will cry out your dismay
To the unheeding gods;
You will wait and look and listen—
I shall not be there.

There is a part of you I love
More than your hands in mine at rest;
There is a part of you I love
More than your lips upon my breast.

There is a part of you I wound
Even in my caress;
There is a part of you withheld
I may not possess.

There is a part of you I hate—
Your need of me
When you would be alone,
Alone and free.

When you come tonight
To our small room
You will look and listen—
I shall not be there.

FLASH-LIGHTS

I

Candles toppling sideways in tomato cans
Sputter and sizzle at head and foot.
The gaudy patterns of a patch-work quilt
Lie smooth and straight
Save where upswelling over a silent shape.
A man in high boots stirs something on a rusty stove
Round and round and round,
As a new cry like a bleating lamb's
Pierces his brain.
After a time the man busies himself
With hammer and nails and rough-hewn lumber,
But fears to strike a blow.
Outside the moonlight sleeps white upon the plain
And the bark of a coyote shrills across the night.

II

A smell of musk
Comes to him pungently through the darkness.
On the screen
Scenes from foreign lands,
Released by the censor,
Shimmer in cool black and white
Historic information.
He shifts his seat sideways, sideways—
A seeking hand creeps to another hand,
And a leaping flame
Illuminates the historic information.

III

Within the room, sounds of weeping
Low and hushed:

Without, a man, beautiful with the beauty
 Of young strength,
 Holds pitifully to the handle of the door.
 He hiccoughs and turns away,
 While a hand-organ plays,
 "The hours I spend with thee, dear heart."

Walter Conrad Arensberg

VOYAGE À L'INFINI

The swan existing
 Is like a song with an accompaniment
 Imaginary.

Across the grassy lake,
 Across the lake to the shadow of the willows,
 It is accompanied by an image—
 As by Debussy's
"Reflets dans l'eau."

The swan that is
 Reflects
 Upon the solitary water—breast to breast
 With the duplicity:
"The other one!"

And breast to breast it is confused.
 O visionary wedding! O stateliness of the procession!
 It is accompanied by the image of itself
 Alone.

At night
 The lake is a wide silence,
 Without imagination.

AT DAYBREAK

I had a dream and I awoke with it—
 Poor little thing that I had not unclasped
 After the kiss good-by.

And at the surface how it gasped—
 This thing that I had loved in the unlit
 Depth of the drowsy sea. . . .
 Ah me!
 This thing with which I drifted toward the sky.

Driftwood upon a wave—
 Senseless the motion that it gave.

TO HASEKAWA

Perhaps it is no matter that you died.
 Life's an *incognito* which you saw through:
 You never told on life—you had your pride;
 But life has told on you.

DIALOGUE

Be patient, Life, when Love is at the gate,
 And when he enters let him be at home.
 Think of the roads that he has had to roam.
 Think of the years that he has had to wait.

*But if I let Love in I shall be late.
 Another has come first—there is no room.
 And I am thoughtful of the endless loom—
 Let Love be patient, the importunate.*

O Life, be idle and let Love come in,
 And give thy dreamy hair that Love may spin.

*But Love himself is idle with his song.
Let Love come last, and then may Love last long.*

Be patient, Life, for Love is not the last.
Be patient now with Death, for Love has passed.

SONG OF THE SOULS SET FREE .

Wrap the earth in cloudy weather
For a shroud.
We have slipped the earthly tether,
We're above the cloud.
Peep and draw the cloud together,
Peep upon the bowed.

What can they be bowing under,
Wild and wan?
Peep, and draw the cloud asunder,
Peep, and wave a dawn.
It will make them rise and wonder
Whether we are gone.

Wilton Agnew Barrett

A NEW ENGLAND CHURCH

The white church on the hill
Looks over the little bay—
A beautiful thing on the hill
When the mist is gray;
When the hill looks old, and the air turns cold
With the dying day!

The white church on the hill—
A Greek in a Puritan town—
Was built on the brow of the hill
For John Wesley's God's renown,

And a conscience old set a steeple cold
On its Grecian crown.

In a storm of faith on the hill
Hands raised it over the bay.
When the night is clear on the hill,
It stands up strong and gray;
But its door is old, and the tower points cold
To the Milky Way.

The white church on the hill
Looks lonely over the town.
Dim to them under the hill
Is its God's renown,
And its Bible old, and its creed grown cold,
And the letters brown.

Joseph Warren Beach

RUE BONAPARTE

You that but seek your modest rolls and coffee,
When you have passed the bar, and have saluted
Its watchful madam, then pray enter softly
The inner chamber, even as one who treads
The haunts of mating birds, and watch discreetly
Over your paper's edge. There in the corner,
Obscure, ensconced behind the uncovered table,
A man and woman keep their silent tryst.
Outside the morning floods the pavement sweetly;
Yonder aloft a maid throws back the shutters;
The hucksters utter modulated cries
As wistful as some old pathetic ballad.
Within the brooding lovers, unaware,
Sit quiet hand in hand, or in low whispers

Communicate a more articulate love.
Sometimes she plays with strings and, *gently leaning*
Against his shoulder, shows him childish tricks.
She has not touched the glass of milk before her,
Her breakfast and the price of their admittance.
She has a look devoted and confiding
And might be pretty were not life so hard.
But he, gaunt as his rusty bicycle
That stands against the table, and with features
So drawn and stark, has only futile strength.
The love they cherish in this stolen meeting
Through all the day that follows makes her sweeter,
And him perhaps it only leaves more bitter.
But you that have not love at all, old men
That warm your fingers by this fire, discreetly
Play out your morning game of dominoes.

THE VIEW AT GUNDERSON'S

Sitting in his rocker waiting for your tea,
Gazing from his window, this is what you *see*:

A cat that snaps at flies; a track leading down
By log-built shanties gray and brown;

The corner of a barn, and tangled lines of fence
Of rough-hewn pickets standing dense;

The ghost of a tree on a dull, wet day;
And the blanket fog where lies the bay.

But when he's seen the last of you,
Sitting in his rocker, what's *his* view?

(For there he sits, day in, day out,
Nursing his leg—and his dreams, no doubt.)

The snow-slide up behind the *gaard*;
The farm beside old Trondjem *fjord*;

Daughters seven with their cold blue eyes,
And the great pine where his father lies;

The boat that brought him over the sea;
And the toothless woman who makes his tea.

(Their picture, framed on the rough log wall,
Proves she had teeth when he was tall.)

He sees the balsam thick on the hill,
And all he's cleared with a stubborn will.

And last he sees the full-grown son
For whom he hoards what he has won.

You saw little worth the strife:
What he sees is one man's life.

William Rose Benét

THE FALCONER OF GOD

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.

I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!

I shall start a heron soon

In the marsh beneath the moon—

A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,

Rising and crying

Wordless, wondrous things;

The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings

The answer to their woe.

Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!"

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
 I heard the mournful loon
 In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then, with feathery thunder, the bird of my desire
 Broke from the cover
 Flashing silver fire.
 High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
 The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stooped upon him, and gript and held him fast.

My soul dropped through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
 Nay! but a piteous freight,
 A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled—
 All of the wonder
 Gone that ever filled
 Its guise with glory. O bird that I have killed,
 How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
 I shall start a heron soon
 In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!
 I beat forever
 The fens and the sedges.
 The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
 All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find!

THE HORSE THIEF

There he moved, cropping the grass at the purple canyon's lip.

His mane was mixed with the moonlight that silvered his snow-white side,

For the moon sailed out of a cloud with the wake of a spectral ship.

I crouched and I crawled on my belly, my lariat coil looped wide.

Dimly and dark the mesas broke on the starry sky.

A pall covered every color of their gorgeous glory at noon.

I smelt the yucca and mesquite, and stifled my heart's quick cry,

And wormed and crawled on my belly to where he moved against the moon!

Some Moorish barb was that mustang's sire. His lines were beyond all wonder.

From the prick of his ears to the flow of his tail he ached in my throat and eyes.

Steel and velvet grace! As the prophet says, God had "clothed his neck with thunder."

Oh, marvelous with the drifting cloud he drifted across the skies!

And then I was near at hand—crouched, and balanced, and cast the coil;

And the moon was smothered in cloud, and the rope through my hands with a rip!

But somehow I gripped and clung, with the blood in my brain aboil,—

With a turn round the rugged tree-stump there on the purple canyon's lip.

Right into the stars he reared aloft, his red eye rolling and raging.
He whirled and sunfished and lashed, and rocked the earth to
thunder and flame.
He squealed like a regular devil horse. I was haggard and spent
and aging—
Roped clean, but almost storming clear, his fury too fierce to tame.

And I cursed myself for a tenderfoot moon-dazzled to play the part,
But I was doubly desperate then, with the posse pulled out from
town,
Or I'd never have tried it. I only knew I must get a mount and
a start.
The filly had snapped her foreleg short. I had had to shoot her
down.

So there he struggled and strangled, and I snubbed him around
the tree.
Nearer, a little nearer—hoofs planted, and lolling tongue—
Till a sudden slack pitched me backward. He reared right on
top of me.
Mother of God—that moment! He missed me . . . and up
I swung.

Somehow, gone daft completely and clawing a bunch of his mane,
As he stumbled and tripped in the lariat, there I was—up and
astride
And cursing for seven counties! And the mustang? *Just insane!*
Crack-bang! went the rope; we cannoned off the tree—then—
gods, that ride!

A rocket—that's all, a rocket! I dug with my teeth and nails.
Why, we never hit even the high spots (though I hardly remem-
ber things),
But I heard a monstrous booming like a thunder of flapping sails
When he spread—well, *call* me a liar!—when he spread those
wings, those wings!

So white that my eyes were blinded, thick-feathered and wide unfurled

They beat the air into billows. We sailed, and the earth was gone.
Canyon and desert and mesa withered below, with the world.

And then I knew that mustang; for I—was Bellerophon!

Yes, glad as the Greek, and mounted on a horse of the elder gods,
With never a magic bridle or a fountain-mirror nigh!

My chaps and spurs and holster must have looked ill? What's the odds?

I'd a leg over lightning and thunder, careering across the sky!

And forever streaming before me, fanning my forehead cool,
Flowed a mane of molten silver; and just before my thighs
(As I gripped his velvet-muscled ribs, while I cursed myself for a fool),

The steady pulse of those pinions—their wonderful fall and rise!

The bandanna I bought in Bowie blew loose and whipped from my neck.

My shirt was stuck to my shoulders and ribboning out behind.
The stars were dancing, wheeling and glancing, dipping with smirk and beck.

The clouds were flowing, dusking and glowing. We rode a roaring wind.

We soared through the silver starlight to knock at the planets' gates.

New shimmering constellations came whirling into our ken.

Red stars and green and golden swung out of the void that waits

For man's great last adventure; the Signs took shape—and then

I knew the lines of that Centaur the moment I saw him come!

The musical-box of the heavens all around us rolled to a tune
That tinkled and chimed and trilled with silver sounds that struck you dumb,

As if some archangel were grinding out the music of the moon.

Melody-drunk on the Milky Way, as we swept and soared hilarious,
Full in our pathway, sudden he stood—the Centaur of the Stars,
Flashing from head and hoofs and breast! I knew him for Sagittarius.
He reared, and bent and drew his bow. He crouched as a boxer
spars.

Flung back on his haunches, weird he loomed—then leapt—and
the dim void lightened.

Old White Wings shied and swerved aside, and fled from the
splendor-shod.

Through a flashing welter of worlds we charged. I knew why
my horse was frightened.

He *had* two faces—a dog's and a man's—that Babylonian god!

Also, he followed us real as fear. Ping! went an arrow past.

My broncho buck-jumped, humping high. We plunged . . . I
guess that's all!

I lay on the purple canyon's lip, when I opened my eyes at last—
Stiff and sore and my head like a drum, but I broke no bones
in the fall.

So you know—and now you may string me up. Such was the
way you caught me.

Thank you for letting me tell it straight, though you never
could greatly care.

For I took a horse that wasn't mine! . . . But there's one the
heavens brought me,

And I'll hang right happy, because I know he is waiting for me
up there.

From creamy muzzle to cannon-bone, by God, he's a peerless
wonder!

He is steel and velvet and furnace-fire, and death's supremest
prize;

And never again shall be roped on earth that neck that is "clothed
with thunder" . . .

String me up, Dave! Go dig my grave! *I rode him across the skies,*

Maxwell Bodenheim

THE REAR-PORCHES OF AN APARTMENT-BUILDING

A sky that has never known sun, moon or stars,
 A sky that is like a dead, kind face,
 Would have the color of your eyes,
 O servant-girl, singing of pear-trees in the sun,
 And scraping the yellow fruit you once picked
 When your lavender-white eyes were alive. . . .
 On the porch above you are two women,
 Whose faces have the color of brown earth that has never felt rain.
 The still wet basins of ponds that have been drained
 Are their eyes.
 They knit gray rosettes and nibble cakes. . . .
 And on the top-porch are three children
 Gravely kissing each others' foreheads—
 And an ample nurse with a huge red fan. . . .

The passing of the afternoon to them
 Is but the lengthening of blue-black shadows on brick walls.

THE INTERNE

Oh, the agony of having too much power!
 In my passive palm are hundreds of lives.
 Strange alchemy!—they drain my blood:
 My heart becomes iron; my brain copper; my eyes silver; my lips
 brass.
 Merely by twitching a supple finger, I twirl lives from me—strong-
 winged,
 Or fluttering and broken.
 They are my children, I am their mother and father.
 I watch them live and die.

THE OLD JEW

No fawn-tinged hospital pajamas could cheat him of his austerity,
Which tamed even the doctors with its pure fire.
They examined him; made him bow to them:
Massive altars were they, at whose swollen feet grovelled a wor-
shiper.
Then they laughed, half in scorn of him; and there came a
miracle.
The little man was above them at a bound.
His austerity, like an irresistible sledge-hammer, drove them lower
and lower:
They dwindled while he soared.

THE MINER

Those on the top say they know you, Earth—they are liars.
You are my father, and the silence I work in is my mother.
Only the son knows his father.
We are alike—sweaty, inarticulate of soul, bending under thick
knowledge.
I drink and shout with my brothers when above you—
Like most children we soon forget the parents of our souls.
But you avidly grip us again—we pay for the little noise of life we
steal.

TO AN ENEMY

I despise my friends more than you.
I would have known myself, but they stood before the mirrors
And painted on them images of the virtues I craved.
You came with sharpest chisel, scraping away the false paint.
Then I knew and detested myself, but not you:
For glimpses of you in the glasses you uncovered
Showed me the virtues whose images you destroyed.

TO A DISCARDED STEEL RAIL

Straight strength pitched into the surliness of the ditch,
A soul you have—strength has always delicate secret reasons.
Your soul is a dull question.
I do not care for your strength, but for your stiff smile at Time—
A smile which men call rust.

Gordon Bottomley

NIGHT AND MORNING SONGS

MY MOON

My moon was lit in an hour of lilies;
The apple-trees seemed older than ever.
It rose from matted trees that sever
The oats from the meadow, and woke the fillies
That reared in dew and gleamed with dew
And ran like water and shadow, and cried.
It moistened and veiled the oats yet new,
And seemed to drip long drops of the tide,
Of the mother-sea so lately left.
Feathers of flower were each bereft
Of color and stem, and floated low;
Another lily opened then
And lost a little gold dust; but when
The lime-boughs lifted there seemed to go
Some life of the moon, like breath that moves
Or parting glances that flutter and strain—
A ghost with hands the color of doves
And feet the color of rain.

ELEGIAC MOOD

From song and dream for ever gone
Are Helen, Helen of Troy,
And Cleopatra made to look upon,
And many a daring boy—
Young Faust and Sigurd and Hippolytus:
They are twice dead and we must find
Great ladies yet unblemished by the mind,
Heroes and acts not cold for us
In amber or spirits of too many words.
Ay, these are murdered by much thinking on.
I hanker even for new shapes of swords,
More different sins, and raptures not yet done.
Yet, as I wait on marvels, such a bird
As maybe Sigurd heard—
A thrush—alighting with a little run
Out-tops the daisies as it passes
And peeps bright-eyed above the grasses.

DAWN

A thrush is tapping a stone
With a snail-shell in its beak;
A small bird hangs from a cherry
Until the stem shall break.
No waking song has begun,
And yet birds chatter and hurry
And throng in the elm's gloom
Because an owl goes home.

Rollo Britten

BIRD OF PASSION

Leave the lovely words unsaid;
For another thought is fled
From my dream-entangled mind.
Bird of passion, unenshrined,
I can never phrase thee quite—
So I speed thee on thy flight,
Unembodied thus forever,
Floating in a mist that never
May be raised. Thou art one
Of the black-winged birds that run,
With uncomprehended flight,
Unimpeded down the night.

Rupert Brooke

RETROSPECT

In your arms was still delight,
Quiet as a street at night;
And thoughts of you, I do remember,
Were green leaves in a darkened chamber,
Were dark clouds in a moonless sky.
Love, in you, went passing by,
Penetrative, remote, and rare,
Like a bird in the wide air;
And, as the bird, it left no trace
In the heaven of your face.
In your stupidity I found
The sweet hush after a sweet sound.
All about you was the light

That dims the graying end of night;
Desire was the unrisen sun,
Joy the day not yet begun,
With tree whispering to tree,
Without wind, quietly.
Wisdom slept within your hair,
And Long-suffering was there,
And, in the flowing of your dress,
Undiscerning Tenderness.
And when you thought, it seemed to me,
Infinitely, and like a sea,
About the slight world you had known
Your vast unconsciousness was thrown. . . .
O haven without wave or tide!
Silence, in which all songs have died!
Holy book, where hearts are still!
And home at length under the hill!
O mother quiet, breasts of peace,
Where love itself would faint and cease!
O infinite deep I never knew,
I would come back, come back to you,
Find you, as a pool unstirred,
Kneel down by you, and never a word,
Lay my head, and nothing said,
In your hands, ungarlanded;
And a long watch you would keep;
And I should sleep, and I should sleep!

NINETEEN-FOURTEEN

I—PEACE

Now, God be thanked who has matched us with his hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping!
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,

Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary;
 Leave the sick hearts that honor could not move,
 And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
 And all the little emptiness of love!
 Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
 Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
 Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
 Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there,
 But only agony, and that has ending;
 And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

II—SAFETY

Dear! of all happy in the hour, most blest
 He who has found our hid security,
 Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest,
 And heard our word, "Who is so safe as we?"
 We have found safety with all things undying.
 The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
 The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
 And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
 We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
 We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.
 War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
 Secretly armed against all death's endeavor;
 Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
 And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

III—THE DEAD

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
 There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
 But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
 These laid the world away; poured out the red
 Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
 Of work and joy, and that unhopèd serene
 That men call age; and those who would have been
 Their sons they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honor has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

IV—THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs, and cheeks. All this is ended.
There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

V—THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less

Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Witter Bynner

TO CELIA

I—CONSUMMATION

There was a strangeness on your lips,
Lips that had been so sure;
You still were mine but in eclipse,
Beside me but obscure.

There was a cloud upon your heart;
For, Celia, where you lay,
Death, come to break your life apart,
Had led your love away.

Through the cold distance of your eyes
You could no longer see.
But when you died, you heard me rise
And followed suddenly.

And close beside me, looking down
As I did on the dead,
You made of time a wedding-gown,
Of space a marriage-bed.

I took, in you, death for a wife,
You married death in me,
Singing, "There is no other life,
No other God than we!"

II—DURING A CHORALE BY CESAR FRANCK

In an old chamber softly lit
We heard the Chorale played,
And where you sat, an exquisite
Image of Life and lover of it,
Death sang a serenade.

I know now, Celia, what you heard,
And why you turned and smiled.
It was the white wings of a bird
Offering flight, and you were stirred
Like an adventurous child.

Death sang: "Oh, lie upon your bier,
Uplift your countenance!"
Death bade me be your cavalier,
Called me to march and shed no tear,
But sing to you and dance.

And when you followed, lured and led
By those mysterious wings,
And when I heard that you were dead,
I could not weep. I sang instead,
As a true lover sings.

.

Today a room is softly lit;
I hear the Chorale played.
And where you come, an exquisite
Image of Death and lover of it,
Life sings a serenade.

III—SONGS ASCENDING

Love has been sung a thousand ways—
So let it be;
The songs ascending in your praise
Through all my days
Are three.

Your cloud-white body first I sing;
Your love was heaven's blue,
And I, a bird, flew carolling
In ring on ring
Of you.

Your nearness is the second song;
When God began to be,
And bound you strongly, right or wrong,
With his own thong,
To me.

But oh, the song, eternal, high,
That tops these two!—
You live forever, you who die,
I am not I
But you.

GRIEVE NOT FOR BEAUTY

Grieve not for the invisible, transported brow
On which like leaves the dark hair grew,
Nor for the lips of laughter that are now
Laughing inaudibly in sun and dew,
Nor for those limbs that, fallen low
And seeming faint and slow,
Shall yet pursue
More ways of swiftness than the swallow dips

Among . . . and find more winds than ever blew
The straining sails of unimpeded ships!
Mourn not!—yield only happy tears
To deeper beauty than appears!

Joseph Campbell

AT HARVEST

Earth travails,
Like a woman come to her time.

The swaying corn-haulms
In the heavy places of the field
Cry to be gathered.
Apples redden, and drop from their rods.
Out of their sheath of prickly leaves
The marrows creep, fat and white.
The blue pallor of ripeness
Comes on the fruit of the vine-branch.

Fecund and still fecund
After æons of bearing:
Not old, not dry, not wearied out;
But fresh as when the unseen Right Hand
First moved on Brí,
And the candle of day was set,
And dew fell from the stars' feet,
And cloths of greenness covered thee.

Let me kiss thy breasts:
I am thy son and lover.

Womb-fellow am I of the sunburnt oat,
Friendly gossip of the mearings;

Womb-fellow of the dark and sweet-scented apple;
Womb-fellow of the gourd and of the grape:
Like begotten, like born.

And yet without a lover's knowledge
Of thy secrets
I would walk the ridges of the hills,
Kindless and desolate.

What were the storm-driven moon to me,
Seed of another father?
What the overflowing
Of the well of dawn?
What the hollow,
Red with rowan fire?
What the king-fern?
What the belled heath?
What the drum of grouse's wing,
Or glint of spar,
Caught from the pit
Of a deserted quarry?

Let me kiss thy breasts:
I am thy son and lover.

ON WAKING

Sleep, gray brother of death,
Has touched me,
And passed on.

I arise, facing the east—
Pearl-doored sanctuary
From which light,
Hand-linked with dew and fire,
Dances.

Hail, essence, hail!
Fill the windows of my soul
With beauty:
Pierce and renew my bones:
Pour knowledge into my heart
As wine.

Cualann is bright before thee.
Its rocks melt and swim:
The secret they have kept
From the ancient nights of darkness
Flies like a bird.

What mourns?
Cualann's secret flying,
A lost voice
In endless fields.
What rejoices?
My voice lifted praising thee.

Praise! Praise! Praise!
Praise out of trumpets, whose brass
Is the unyoked strength of bulls;
Praise upon harps, whose strings
Are the light movements of birds;
Praise of leaf, praise of blossom,
Praise of the red-fibred clay;
Praise of grass,
Fire-woven veil of the temple;
Praise of the shapes of clouds;
Praise of the shadows of wells;
Praise of worms, of fetal things,
And of the things in time's thought
Not yet begotten.
To thee, queller of sleep,
Looser of the snare of death.

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her,
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill.

Nancy Campbell

THE APPLE-TREE

I saw the archangels in my apple-tree last night,
I saw them like great birds in the starlight—
Purple and burning blue, crimson and shining white.

And each to each they tossed an apple to and fro,
And once I heard their laughter gay and low;
And yet I felt no wonder that it should be so.

But when the apple came one time to Michael's lap
I heard him say: "The mysteries that enwrap
The earth and fill the heavens can be read here, mayhap."

Then Gabriel spoke: "I praise the deed, the hidden thing."
"The beauty of the blossom of the spring
I praise," cried Raphael. Uriel: "The wise leaves I sing."

And Michael: "I will praise the fruit, perfected, round,
Full of the love of God, herein being bound
His mercies gathered from the sun and rain and ground."

So sang they till a small wind through the branches stirred,
And spoke of coming dawn; and at its word
Each fled away to heaven, winged like a bird.

THE MONKEY

I saw you hunched and shivering on the stones,
The bleak wind piercing to your fragile bones,
Your shabby scarlet all inadequate:
A little ape that had such human eyes
They seemed to hide behind their miseries—
Their dumb and hopeless bowing down to fate—
Some puzzled wonder. Was your monkey soul
Sickening with memories of gorgeous days,
Of tropic playfellows and forest ways,
Where, agile, you could swing from bole to bole
In an enchanted twilight with great flowers
For stars; or on a bough the long night hours
Sit out in rows, and chatter at the moon?
Shuffling you went, your tiny chilly hand
Outstretched for what you did not understand;
Your puckered mournful face begging a boon
That but enslaved you more. They who passed by
Saw nothing sorrowful; gave laugh or stare,
Unheeding that the little antic there
Played in the gutter such a tragedy.

Skipwith Cannell

THE RED BRIDGE

The arches of the red bridge
Are stronger than ever:
The arches of the scarlet bridge
Are of rough, bleak stone.

(Why should such massive arches be the span
From cloud to tenuous cloud?)

Let us not seek omens in the guts
Of newly slain fowls;
Leaving such play to the children,
Let us pluck wild swans
From under the moon;
Or, challenging strong, terrible men,
Let us slay them and seek truth
In their smoking entrails.

Let us fling runners
Across the red bridge,
Deep-lunged runners who will return to us
With tidings of the far countries
And the strange seas!

There be many terrible men
Going out upon the bridge,
Through the little door
That is by the steps from the river.

THE KING

Seven full-paunched eunuchs came to me,
Bearing before them upon a silver shield
The secrets of my enemy.

As they crossed my threshold to stand,
With stately and hypocritical gesture
In a row before me,
One stumbled.
The dull, incurious eyes of the others
Blazed into no laughter,
Only a haggard malice
At the discomfiture
Of their companion.

Why should such T h i n g s have power
Not spoken for in the rules of men?

I would not receive them.
With my head covered I motioned them
To go forth from my presence.

Where shall I find an enemy
Worthy of me as him they defaced?

As they left me,
Bearing with them
Lewd shield and scarlet crown,
One paused upon the threshold,
Insolent,
To sniff a flower.

Even him I permitted to go forth
Safely.

.

Therefore
I have renounced my kingdom;
In a little bronze boat I have set sail
Out
Upon the sea.

There is no land, and the sea
Is black like the cypresses waiting
At midnight in the place of tombs;
Is black like the pool of ink
In the palm of a soothsayer.

My boat
Fears the white-lipped waves
That snatch at her,
Hungrily,
Furtively,
As they steal past like cats
Into the night:
And beneath me, in their hidden places,
The great fishes talk of me
In a tongue I have forgotten.

Willa Sibert Cather

THE PALATINE

In the "Dark Ages"

"Have you been with the King to Rome,
Brother, big brother?"

"I've been there and I've come home.
Back to your play, little brother."

"Oh, how high is Cæsar's house,
Brother, big brother?"

"Goats about the doorways browse;
Night-hawks nest in the burnt roof-tree.
Home of the wild bird and home of the bee,
A thousand chambers of marble lie
Wide to the sun and the wind and the sky.
Poppies we find amongst our wheat
Grow on Cæsar's banquet seat.
Cattle crop and neat-herds drowse
On the floors of Cæsar's house."

"But what has become of Cæsar's gold,
Brother, big brother?"

"The times are bad and the world is old—
Who knows the where of the Cæsar's gold?
Night comes black o'er the Cæsar's hill;
The wells are deep and the tales are ill;
Fireflies gleam in the damp and mold—
All that is left of the Cæsar's gold.
Back to your play, little brother."

"What has become of the Cæsar's men,
Brother, big brother?"

"Dogs in the kennel and wolf in the den
Howl for the fate of the Cæsar's men,

Slain in Asia, slain in Gaul,
By Dacian border and Persian wall.
Rhineland orchard and Danube fen
Fatten their roots on Cæsar's men."

"Why is the world so sad and wide,
Brother, big brother?"
"Saxon boys by their fields that bide
Need not know if the world is wide.
Climb no mountain but Shere-end Hill,
Cross no water but goes to mill.
Ox in the stable and cow in the byre,
Smell of the wood-smoke and sleep by the fire;
Sun-up in seed-time—a likely lad
Hurts not his head that the world is sad.
Back to your play, little brother."

SPANISH JOHNNY

The old West, the old time,
The old wind singing through
The red, red grass a thousand miles—
And, Spanish Johnny, you!
He'd sit beside the water ditch
When all his herd was in,
And never mind a child, but sing
To his mandolin.

The big stars, the blue night,
The moon-enchanted lane;
The olive man who never spoke,
But sang the songs of Spain.
His speech with men was wicked talk—
To hear it was a sin;
But those were golden things he said
To his mandolin.

The gold songs, the gold stars,
 The word so golden then;
 And the hand so tender to a child—
 Had killed so many men.
 He died a hard death long ago
 Before the Road came in—
 The night before he swung, he sang
 To his mandolin.

Padraic Colum

POLONIUS AND THE BALLAD SINGERS

A gaunt-built woman and her son-in-law—
 A broad-faced fellow, with such flesh as shows
 Nothing but easy nature—and his wife,
 The woman's daughter, who spills all her talk
 Out of a wide mouth, but who has eyes as gray
 As Connemara, where the mountain-ash
 Shows berries red indeed: they enter now—
 Our country singers!

"Sing, my good woman, sing us some romance
 That has been round your chimney-nooks so long
 'Tis nearly native; something blown here
 And since made racy—like yon tree, I might say,
 Native by influence if not by species,
 Shaped by our winds. You understand, I think?"

"I'll sing the song, sir."

To-night you see my face—
 Maybe nevermore you'll gaze
 On the one that for you left his friends and kin;

For by the hard commands
Of the lord that rules these lands
On a ship I'll be borne from Cruckaunfinn!

Oh, you know your beauty bright
Has made him think delight
More than from any fair one he will gain;
Oh, you know that all his will
Strains and strives around you till
As the hawk upon his hand you are as tame!

Then she to him replied:
I'll no longer you deny,
And I'll let you have the pleasure of my charms;
For to-night I'll be your bride,
And whatever may betide
It's we will lie in one another's arms!

"You should not sing
With body doubled up and face aside—
There is a climax here—'It's we will lie'—
Hem—passionate! And what does your daughter sing?"

"A song I like when I do climb bare hills—
'Tis all about a hawk."

No bird that sits on rock or bough
Has such a front as thine;
No king that has made war his trade
Such conquest in his eyne!
I mark thee rock-like on the rock
Where none can see a shape.
I climb, but thou dost climb with wings,
And like a wish escape,
She said—
And like a wish escape!

No maid that kissed his bonny mouth
Of another mouth was glad;
Such pride was in our chieftain's eyes,
Such countenance he had!
But since they made him fly the rocks,
Thou, creature, art my quest.
Then lift me with thy steady eyes.
If then to tear my breast,
She said—
If then to tear my breast!

"The songs they have
Are the last relics of the feudal world:
Women will keep them—byzants, doubloons,
When men will take up songs that are as new
As dollar bills. What song have you, young man?"

"A song my father had, sir. It was sent him
From across the sea, and there was a letter with it,
Asking my father to put it to a tune
And sing it all roads. He did that, in troth,
And five pounds of tobacco were sent with the song
To fore-reward him. I'll sing it for you now—
The Baltimore Exile."

The house I was bred in—ah, does it remain?
Low walls and loose thatch standing lone in the rain,
With the clay of the walls coming through with its stain,
Like the blackbird's left nest in the briar!

Does a child there give heed to the song of the lark,
As it lifts and it drops till the fall of the dark,
When the heavy-foot kine trudge home from the paark,
Or do none but the red-shank now listen?

The sloe-bush, I know, grows close to the well,
 And its long-lasting blossoms are there, I can tell,
 When the kid that was yeaned when the first ones befell
 Can jump to the ditch that they grow on!

But there's silence on all. Then do none ever pass
 On the way to the fair or the pattern or mass?
 Do the gray-coated lads drive the ball through the grass
 And speed to the sweep of the hurl?

O youths of my land! Then will no Bolivar
 Ever muster your ranks for delivering war?
 Will your hopes become fixed and beam like a star?
 Will they pass like the mists from your fields?

The swan and the swallows, the cuckoo and crane,
 May visit my land and find hillside and lake.
 And I send my song. I'll not see her awake—
 I'm too old a bird to uncage now!

"Silver's but lead in exchange for songs,
 But take it and spend it."

"We will. And may we meet your honor's like
 Every day's end."

"A tune is more lasting than the voice of the birds."

"A song is more lasting than the riches of the world."

NOTE. The last stanza in the first ballad sung is a fragment of an old country song; the rest of it, with the other two ballads, is invented. But they are all in the convention of songs still sung by strolling ballad-singers. I have written the common word for pasture-field "paurk" so as not to give a wrong association: it might be written "park," as Burns, using the word in the same sense, writes it. "Paurk" or "park" is Gaelic for pasture field, and is always used in Irish country speech in that sense. The two last lines spoken are translations of a Gaelic phrase which has been used by Dr. Douglas Hyde as a motto for his collection of Connacht love songs. P. C.

THE SEA BIRD TO THE WAVE

On and on,
 O white brother!
 Thunder does not daunt thee!
 How thou movest!
 By thine impulse—
 With no wing!
 Fairest thing
 The wide sea shows me!
 On and on
 O white brother!
 Art thou gone!

OLD MEN COMPLAINING

First Old Man

*He threw his crutched stick down: there came
 Into his face the anger flame,
 And he spoke viciously of one
 Who thwarted him—his son's son.
 He turned his head away.—“I hate
 Absurdity of language, prate
 From growing fellows. We'd not stay
 About the house the whole of a day
 When we were young,
 Keeping no job and giving tongue!*

*“Not us in troth! We would not come
 For bit or sup, but stay from home
 If we gave answers, or we'd creep
 Back to the house, and in we'd peep
 Just like a corncrake.*

*“My grandson and his comrades take
 A piece of coal from you, from me
 A log, or sod of turf, maybe;*

And in some empty place they'll light
A fire, and stay there all night,
A wisp of lads! Now understand
The blades of grass under my hand
Would be destroyed by company!
There's no good company: we go
With what is lowest to the low!
He stays up late, and how can he
Rise early? Sure he lags in bed,
And she is worn to a thread
With calling him—his grandmother.
She's an old woman, and she must make
Stir when the birds are half awake
In dread he'd lose this job like the other!"

Second Old Man

"They brought yon fellow over here,
And set him up for an overseer:
Though men from work are turned away
That thick-necked fellow draws full pay—
Three pounds a week. . . . They let burn down
The timber yard behind the town
Where work was good; though firemen stand
In boots and brasses big and grand
The crow of a cock away from the place.
And with the yard they let burn too
The clock in the tower, the clock I knew
As well as I know the look in my face."

Third Old Man

"The fellow you spoke of has broken his bounds—
He came to skulk inside of these grounds:
Behind the bushes he lay down
And stretched full hours in the sun.
He rises now, and like a crane
He looks abroad. He's off again:

Three pounds a week, and still he owes
Money in every street he goes,
Hundreds of pounds where we'd not get
The second shilling of a debt."

First Old Man

"Old age has every impediment
Vexation and discontent;
The rich have more than we: for bit
The cut of bread, and over it
The scrape of hog's lard, and for sup
Warm water in a cup.
But different sorts of feeding breaks
The body more than fasting does
With pains and aches.

"I'm not too badly off, for I
Have pipe and tobacco, a place to lie,
A nook to myself; but from my hand
Is taken the strength to back command—
I'm broken, and there's gone from me
The privilege of authority."

*I heard them speak—
The old men heavy on the sod,
Letting their angers come
Between them and the thought of God.*

Grace Hazard Conkling**REFUGEES***Belgium—1914*

"Mother, the poplars cross the moon;
The road runs on, so white and far,
We shall not reach the city soon:
Oh, tell me where we are!"

"Have patience, patience, little son,
And we shall find the way again:
(God show me the untraveled one!
God give me rest from men!)"

"Mother, you did not tell me why
You hurried so to come away.
I saw big soldiers riding by;
I should have liked to stay."

"Hush, little man, and I will sing
Just like a soldier, if I can—
They have a song for everything.
Listen, my little man!

"This is the soldiers' marching song:
We'll play this is the village street—"

"Yes, but this road is very long,
And stones have hurt my feet."

"Nay, little pilgrim, up with you!
And yonder field shall be the town.
I'll show you how the soldiers do
Who travel up and down.

"They march and sing and march again,
 Not minding all the stones and dust:
 They go, (God grant me rest from men!)
 Forward, because they must."

"Mother, I want to go to sleep."
 "No, darling! Here is bread to eat!
 (O God, if thou couldst let me weep,
 Or heal my broken feet!)"

"THE LITTLE ROSE IS DUST, MY DEAR"

The little rose is dust, my dear;
 The elfin wind is gone
 That sang a song of silver words
 And cooled our hearts with dawn.

And what is left to hope, my dear,
 Or what is left to say?
 The rose, the little wind and you
 Have gone so far away.

Alice Corbin

O WORLD

O world that changes under my hand,
 O brown world, bitter and bright,
 And full of hidden recesses
 Of love and light—

O world, what use would there be to me
 Of power beyond power
 To change, or establish new balance,
 To build, or deflower?

THE NEW POETRY

O world, what use would there be?
Had I the Creator's fire,
I could not build you nearer
To my heart's desire!

TWO VOICES

There is a country full of wine
And liquor of the sun,
Where sap is running all the year,
And spring is never done,
Where all is good as it is fair,
And love and will are one.
Old age may never come there,
But ever in to-day
The people talk as in a dream
And laugh slow time away.

But would you stay as now you are,
Or as a year ago?
Oh, not as then, for then how small
The wisdom we did owe!
Or if forever as to-day,
How little we could know!

Then welcome age, and fear not sorrow;
To-day's no better than to-morrow,
Or yesterday that flies.
By the low light in your eyes,
By the love that in me lies,
I know we grow more lovely
Growing wise.

LOVE ME AT LAST

Love me at last, or if you will not,
Leave me;
Hard words could never, as these half-words,
Grieve me:
Love me at last—or leave me.

Love me at last, or let the last word uttered
Be but your own;
Love me, or leave me—as a cloud, a vapor,
Or a bird flown.
Love me at last—I am but sliding water
Over a stone.

HUMORESQUE

To some the fat gods
Give money,
To some love;

But the gods have given me
Money a n d love:

N o t t o o m u c h m o n e y,
N o r q u i t e e n o u g h l o v e !

To some the fat gods
Give money,
To some love.

ONE CITY ONLY

One city only, of all I have lived in,
And one house of that city, belong to me . . .
I remember the mellow light of afternoon

Slanting across brick buildings on the waterfront,
And small boats at rest on the floating tide,
And larger boats at rest in the near-by harbor;
And I know the tidal smell, and the smell of mud,
Uncovering oyster flats, and the brown bare toes of small negroes
With the mud oozing between them;
And the little figures leaping from log to log,
And the white children playing among them—
I remember how I played among them.
And I remember the recessed windows of the gloomy halls
In the darkness of decaying grandeur,
The feel of cool linen in the cavernous bed,
And the window curtain swaying gently
In the night air;
All the half-hushed noises of the street
In the southern town,
And the thrill of life—
Like a hand in the dark
With its felt, indeterminate meaning:
I remember that I knew there the stirring of passion,
Fear, and the knowledge of sin,
Tragedy, laughter, death. . . .

And I remember, too, on a dead Sunday afternoon
In the twilight,
When there was no one else in the house,
My self suddenly separated itself
And left me alone,
So that the world lay about me, lifeless.
I could not touch it, or feel it, or see it;
Yet I was there.
The sensation lingers:
Only the most vital threads
Hold me at all to living . . .
Yet I only live truly when I think of that house;
Only enter then into being.

One city only of all I have lived in,
And one house of that city, belong to me.

APPARITIONS

I

A thin gray shadow on the edge of thought
Hiding its wounds:
These are the wounds of sorrow—
It was my hand that made them;
And this gray shadow that resembles you
Is my own heart, weeping . . .
You sleep quietly beneath the shade
Of willows in the south.

II

When the cold dawn stood above the house-tops,
Too late I remembered the cry
In the night of a wild bird flying
Through the rain-filled sky.

THE POOL

Do you remember the dark pool at Nîmes,
The pool that had no bottom?
Shadowed by Druids ere the Romans came—
Dark, still, with little bubbles rising
So quietly level with its rim of stone
That one stood shuddering with the breathless fear
Of one short step?

My little sister stood beside the pool
As dark as that of Nîmes.
I saw her white face as she took the plunge;
I could not follow her, although I tried.

The silver bubbles circled to the brink,
 And then the water parted:
 With dream-white face my little sister rose
 Dripping from that dark pool, and took the hands
 Outstretched to meet her.

I may not speak to her of all she's seen;
 She may not speak to me of all she knows,
 Because her words mean nothing:
 She chooses them
 As one to whom our language is quite strange,
 As children make queer words with lettered blocks
 Before they know the way. . . .

My little sister stood beside the pool—
 I could not plunge in with her, though I tried.

MUSIC

*The ancient songs
 Pass deathward mournfully.*
 R. A.

The old songs
 Die.
 Yes, the old songs die.
 Cold lips that sang them,
 Cold lips that sang them—
 The old songs die,
 And the lips that sang them
 Are only a pinch of dust.

I saw in Pamplona
 In a musty museum—
 I saw in Pamplona
 In a buff-colored museum—
 I saw in Pamplona

A memorial
Of the dead violinist;
I saw in Pamplona
A memorial
Of Pablo Sarasate.

Dust was inch-deep on the cases,
Dust on the stick-pins and satins,
Dust on the badges and orders,
On the wreath from the oak of Guernica!

The old songs
Die—
And the lips that sang them.
Wreaths, withered and dusty,
Cuff-buttons with royal insignia,
These, in a musty museum,
Are all that is left of Sarasate.

WHAT DIM ARCADIAN PASTURES

What dim Arcadian pastures
Have I known
That suddenly, out of nothing,
A wind is blown,
Lifting a veil and a darkness,
Showing a purple sea—
And under your hair the faun's eyes
Look out on me?

NODES

The endless, foolish merriment of stars
Beside the pale cold sorrow of the moon,
Is like the wayward noises of the world
Beside my heart's uplifted silent tune.

The little broken glitter of the waves
 Beside the golden sun's intense white blaze,
 Is like the idle chatter of the crowd
 Beside my heart's unwearied song of praise.

The sun and all the planets in the sky
 Beside the sacred wonder of dim space,
 Are notes upon a broken, tarnished lute
 That God will someday mend and put in place.

And space, beside the little secret joy
 Of God that sings forever in the clay,
 Is smaller than the dust we can not see,
 That yet dies not, till time and space decay.

And as the foolish merriment of stars
 Beside the cold pale sorrow of the moon,
 My little song, my little joy, my praise,
 Beside God's ancient, everlasting rune.

Adelaide Crapsey

CINQUAINS

NOVEMBER NIGHT

Listen.
 With faint dry sound,
 Like steps of passing ghosts,
 The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
 And fall.

TRIAD

These be
 Three silent things:
 The falling snow . . . the hour

Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

"Why do
You thus devise
Evil against her?" "For that
She is beautiful, delicate;
Therefore."

THE GUARDED WOUND

If it
Were lighter touch
Than petal of flower resting
On grass, oh still too heavy it were,
Too heavy!

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

FATE DEFIED

As it
Were tissue of silver
I'll wear, O fate, thy grey,
And go mistily radiant, clad
Like the moon.

THE PLEDGE

White doves of Cytherea, by your quest
Across the blue Heaven's bluest highest air,
And by your certain homing to Love's breast,
Still to be true and ever true—I swear.

EXPENSES

Little my lacking fortunes show
For this to eat and that to wear;
Yet laughing, Soul, and gaily go!
An obol pays the Stygian fare.

ADVENTURE

Sun and wind and beat of sea,
Great lands stretching endlessly . . .
Where be bonds to bind the free?
All the world was made for me!

DIRGE

Never the nightingale,
Oh, my dear,
Never again the lark
Thou wilt hear;
Though dusk and the morning still
Tap at thy window-sill,
Thou ever love call and call
Thou wilt not hear at all,
My dear, my dear.

SONG

I make my shroud, but no one knows—
So shimmering fine it is and fair,
With stitches set in even rows.
I make my shroud, but no one knows.

In door-way where the lilac blows,
Humming a little wandering air,
I make my shroud and no one knows,
So shimmering fine it is and fair.

THE LONELY DEATH

In the cold I will rise, I will bathe
In waters of ice; myself
Will shiver, and shrive myself,
Alone in the dawn, and anoint
Forehead and feet and hands;
I will shutter the windows from light,
I will place in their sockets the four
Tall candles and set them a-flame
In the grey of the dawn; and myself
Will lay myself straight in my bed,
And draw the sheet under my chin.

H. D.

HERMES OF THE WAYS

I

The hard sand breaks,
And the grains of it
Are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it,
The wind,
Playing on the wide shore,
Piles little ridges,
And the great waves
Break over it.

But more than the many-foamed ways
Of the sea,
I know him

Of the triple path-ways,
Hermes,
Who awaiteth.

Dubious,
Facing three ways,
Welcoming wayfarers,
He whom the sea-orchard
Shelters from the west,
From the east
Weathers sea-wind;
Fronts the great dunes.

Wind rushes
Over the dunes,
And the coarse, salt-crusted grass
Answers.

Heu,
It whips round my ankles!

II

Small is
This white stream,
Flowing below ground
From the poplar-shaded hill,
But the water is sweet.

Apples on the small trees
Are hard,
Too small,
Too late ripened
By a desperate sun
That struggles through sea-mist.
The boughs of the trees
Are twisted

By many bafflings;
Twisted are
The small-leafed boughs.

But the shadow of them
Is not the shadow of the mast head
Nor of the torn sails.

Hermes, Hermes,
The great sea foamed,
Gnashed its teeth about me;
But you have waited,
Where sea-grass tangles with
Shore-grass.

PRIAPUS

Keeper of Orchards

I saw the first pear
As it fell.
The honey-seeking, golden-banded,
The yellow swarm
Was not more fleet than I,
(Spare us from loveliness!)
And I fell prostrate,
Crying,
"Thou hast flayed us with thy blossoms;
Spare us the beauty
Of fruit-trees!"

The honey-seeking
Paused not,
The air thundered their song,
And I alone was prostrate.

O rough-hewn
God of the orchard,

THE NEW POETRY

I bring thee an offering;
 Do thou, alone unbeautiful
 (Son of the god),
 Spare us from loveliness.

The fallen hazel-nuts,
 Stripped late of their green sheaths,
 The grapes, red-purple,
 Their berries
 Dripping with wine,
 Pomegranates already broken,
 And shrunken figs,
 And quinces untouched,
 I bring thee as offering.

THE POOL

Are you alive?
 I touch you—
 You quiver like a sea-fish.
 I cover you with my net.
 What are you, banded one?

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
 Whirl your pointed pines.
 Splash your great pines
 On our rocks.
 Hurl your green over us—
 Cover us with your pools of fir.

THE GARDEN

I

You are clear,
 O rose, cut in rock.

I could scrape the color
From the petals,
Like spilt dye from a rock.

If I could break you
I could break a tree.

If I could stir
I could break a tree,
I could break you.

II


O wind, rend open the heat,
Cut apart the heat,
Slit it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
Through this thick air;
Fruit cannot fall into heat
That presses up and blunts
The points of pears,
And rounds grapes.

Cut the heat:
Plough through it,
Turning it on either side
Of your path.

MOONRISE

Will you glimmer on the sea?
Will you fling your spear-head
On the shore?
What note shall we pitch?



THE NEW POETRY

We have a song,
On the bank we share our arrows—
The loosed string tells our note:

*O flight,
Bring her swiftly to our song.
She is great,
We measure her by the pine-trees.*

THE SHRINE

"She watches over the sea"

I

Are your rocks shelter for ships?—
Have you sent galleys from your beach,
Are you graded—a safe crescent—
Where the tide lifts them back to port?
Are you full and sweet,
Tempting the quiet
To depart in their trading ships?

Nay, you are great, fierce, evil—
You are the land-blight.
You have tempted men
But they perished on your cliffs.

Your lights are but dank shoals,
Slate and pebble and wet shells
And sea-weed fastened to the rocks.

It was evil—evil
When they found you,
When the quiet men looked at you.
They sought a headland
Shaded with ledge of cliff
From the wind-blast.

But you—you are unsheltered,
Cut with the weight of wind.
You shudder when it strikes,
Then lift, swelled with the blast.
You sink as the tide sinks,
You shrill under hail and sound,
Thunder when thunder sounds.

You are useless:
When the tides swirl
Your boulders cut and wreck
The staggering ships.

II

You are useless,
O grave, O beautiful.
The landsmen tell it—I have heard—
You are useless.

And the wind sounds with this
And the sea
Where rollers shot with blue
Cut under deeper blue.

Oh, but stay tender, enchanted
Where wave-lengths cut you
Apart from all the rest—
For we have found you,
We watch the splendor of you,
We thread throat on throat of freesia
For your shelf.

You are not forgot,
O plunder of lilies,
Honey is not more sweet
Than the salt stretch of your beach.

III

Stay—stay—
But terror has caught us now.
We passed the men in ships,
We dared deeper than the fisher-folk;
And you strike us with terror,
O bright shaft.

Flame passes under us
And sparks that unknot the flesh—
Sorrow, splitting bone from bone,
Splendors thwart our eyes
And rifts in the splendor,
Sparks and scattered light.

Many warned of this,
Men said:
“There are wrecks on the fore-beach,
Wind will beat your ship,
There is no shelter in that headland;
It is useless waste, that edge,
That front of rock—
Sea-gulls clang beyond the breakers,
None venture to that spot.”

IV

But hail—
As the tide slackens,
As the wind beats out,
We hail this shore—
We sing to you,
Spirit between the headlands
And the further rocks.

Though oak-beams split,
Though boats and sea-men flounder,
And the strait grind sand with sand
And cut boulders to sand and drift—

Your eyes have pardoned our faults,
Your hands have touched us;
You have leaned forward a little
And the waves can never thrust us back
From the splendor of your ragged coast.

Mary Carolyn Davies

CLOISTERED

To-night the little girl-nun died.
Her hands were laid
Across her breast; the last sun tried
To kiss her quiet braid;
And where the little river cried,
Her grave was made.

The little girl-nun's soul, in awe,
Went silently
To where her brother Christ she saw,
Under the Living Tree;
He sighed, and his face seemed to draw
Her tears, to see.

He laid his hands on her hands mild,
And gravely blessed;
"Blind, they that kept you so," he smiled,
With tears unguessed.
"Saw they not Mary held a child
Upon her breast?"

SONGS OF A GIRL

I

Perhaps,
God, planting Eden,
Dropped, by mistake, a seed
In Time's neighbor-plot,
That grew to be
This hour?

II

You and I picked up Life and looked at it curiously;
We did not know whether to keep it for a plaything or not.
It was beautiful to see, like a red firecracker,
And we knew, too, that it was lighted.
We dropped it while the fuse was still burning. . .

III

I am going to die too, flower, in a little while—
Do not be so proud.

IV

The sun is dying
Alone
On an island
In the bay.

Close your eyes, poppies—
I would not have you see death,
You are so young!

V

The sun falls
Like a drop of blood
From some hero.

We,
Who love pain,
Delight in this.

Fannie Stearns Davis

PROFITS

Yes, stars were with me formerly.
(I also knew the wind and sea;
And hill-tops had my feet by heart.
Their shagged heights would sting and start
When I came leaping on their backs.
I knew the earth's queer crooked cracks,
Where hidden waters weave a low
And druid chant of joy and woe.)

But stars were with me most of all.
I heard them flame and break and fall.
Their excellent array, their free
Encounter with Eternity,
I learned. And it was good to know
That where God walked, I too might go.

Now, all these things are passed. For I
Grow very old and glad to die.
What did they profit me, say you,
These distant bloodless things I knew?

Profit? What profit hath the sea
Of her deep-throated threnody?
What profit hath the sun, who stands
Staring on space with idle hands?
And what should God Himself acquire
From all the aeons' blood and fire?

My profit is as theirs: to be
Made proof against mortality:
To know that I have companied
With all that shines and lives, amid

So much the years sift through their hands,
Most mortal, windy, worthless sands.

This day I have great peace. With me
Shall stars abide eternally!

SOULS

My soul goes clad in gorgeous things,
Scarlet and gold and blue.
And at her shoulder sudden wings
Like long flames flicker through.

And she is swallow-fleet, and free
From mortal bonds and bars.
She laughs, because eternity
Blossoms for her with stars!

O folk who scorn my stiff gray gown,
My dull and foolish face,
Can ye not see my soul flash down,
A singing flame through space?

And folk, whose earth-stained looks I hate,
Why may I not divine
Your souls, that must be passionate,
Shining and swift, as mine?

Walter de la Mare

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head;

And he smote upon the door again a second time;
 "Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
 That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
 By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered
 That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
 From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady:
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady

THE NEW POETRY

So much the years sift through their hands,
Most mortal, windy, worthless sands.

This day I have great peace. With me
Shall stars abide eternally!

SOULS

My soul goes clad in gorgeous things,
Scarlet and gold and blue.
And at her shoulder sudden wings
Like long flames flicker through.

And she is swallow-fleet, and free
From mortal bonds and bars.
She laughs, because eternity
Blossoms for her with stars!

O folk who scorn my stiff gray gown,
My dull and foolish face,
Can ye not see my soul flash down,
A singing flame through space?

And folk, whose earth-stained looks I hate,
Why may I not divine
Your souls, that must be passionate,
Shining and swift, as mine?

Walter de la Mare

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head;

And he smote upon the door again a second time;
 "Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
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I am the force,
I am the fire,
I am the secret source
Of desire.

I am the urge,
The spur and thong:
Moon of the tides that surge
Into song!

Call me friend or foe,
Little care I,
I go with all who go
Singing to die.

Call me friend or foe. . . .
Taking to give,
I go with all who go
Dying to live.

John Drinkwater

SUNRISE ON RYDAL WATER

To E. de S.

Come down at dawn from windless hills
Into the valley of the lake,
Where yet a larger quiet fills
The hour, and mist and water make
With rocks and reeds and island boughs
One silence and one element,
Where wonder goes surely as once
It went
By Galilean prow.

Moveless the water and the mist,
Moveless the secret air above,
Hushed, as upon some happy tryst
The poised expectancy of love;
What spirit is it that adores
What mighty presence yet unseen?
What consummation works apace
Between
These rapt enchanted shores?

Never did virgin beauty wake
Devouter to the bridal feast
Than moves this hour upon the lake
In adoration to the east.
Here is the bride a god may know,
The primal will, the young consent,
Till surely upon the appointed mood
Intent
The god shall leap—and, lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun—
White, flameless fire; some purity
Thrilling the mist, a splendor won
Out of the world's heart. Let there be
Thoughts, and atonements, and desires;
Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue;
Where now we move with mortal care
Among
Immortal dews and fires.

So the old mating goes apace,
Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,
Lover with lover; and the grace
Of understanding comes unsought

When stars into the twilight steer,
 Or thrushes build among the may,
 Or wonder moves between the hills,
 And day
 Comes up on Rydal mere.

Louise Driscoll

THE METAL CHECKS

[*The scene is a bare room, with two shaded windows at the back, and a fire-place between them with a fire burning low. The room contains a few plain chairs, and a rough wooden table on which are piled many small wooden trays. THE COUNTER, who is Death, sits at the table. He wears a loose gray robe, and his face is partly concealed by a gray veil. THE BEARER is the World, that bears the burden of War. He wears a soiled robe of brown and green and he carries on his back a gunny-bag filled with the little metal disks that have been used for the identification of the slain common soldiers.*]

The Bearer

Here is a sack, a gunny sack,
 A heavy sack I bring.
 Here is toll of many a soul—
 But not the soul of a king.

This is the toll of common men,
 Who lived in the common way;
 Lived upon bread and wine and love,
 In the light of the common day.

This is the toll of working men,
 Blood and brawn and brain.
 Who shall render us again
 The worth of all the slain?

The Counter

Pour them out on the table here.

Clickety—clickety—clack!

For every button a man went out,

And who shall call him back?

Clickety—clickety—clack!

One—two—three—four—

Every disk a soul!

Three score—four score—

So many boys went out to war.

Pick up that one that fell on the floor—

Didn't you see it roll?

That was a man a month ago.

This was a man. Row upon row—

Pile them in tens and count them so.

The Bearer

I have an empty sack.

It is not large. Would you have said

That I could carry on my back

So great an army—and all dead?

[As THE COUNTER *speaks* THE BEARER *lays the sack over his arm and helps count.*]

The Counter

Put a hundred in each tray—

We can tally them best that way.

Careful—do you understand

You have ten men in your hand?

There's another fallen—there—

Under that chair.

[THE BEARER *finds it and restores it.*]

That was a man a month ago;

He could see and feel and know.

Then, into his throat there sped
 A bit of lead.
 Blood was salt in his mouth; he fell
 And lay amid the battle wreck.
 Nothing was left but this metal check—
 And a wife and child, perhaps.

[THE BEARER finds the bag on his arm troublesome. He holds it up, inspecting it.]

The Bearer

What can one do with a thing like this?
 Neither of life nor death it is!
 For the dead serve not, though it served the dead.
 The wounds it carried were wide and red,
 Yet they stained it not. Can a man put food,
 Potatoes or wheat, or even wood
 That is kind and burns with a flame to warm
 Living men who are comforted—
 In a thing that has served so many dead?
 There is no thrift in a graveyard dress,
 It's been shroud for too many men.
 I'll burn it and let the dead bless.

[He crosses himself and throws it into the fire. He watches it burn. THE COUNTER continues to pile up the metal checks, and drop them by hundreds into the trays which he piles one upon another. THE BEARER turns from the fire and speaks more slowly than before. He indicates the metal checks.]

Would not the blood of these make a great sea
 For men to sail their ships on? It may be
 No fish would swim in it, and the foul smell
 Would make the sailors sick. Perhaps in Hell
 There's some such lake for men who rush to war
 Prating of glory, and upon the shore
 Will stand the wives and children and old men
 Bereft, to drive them back again

When they seek haven. Some such thing
I thought the while I bore it on my back
And heard the metal pieces clattering.

The Counter

Four score—five score—
These and as many more.
Forward—march!—into the tray!
No bugles blow today,
No captains lead the way;
But mothers and wives,
Fathers, sisters, little sons,
Count the cost
Of the lost;
And we count the unlived lives,
The forever unborn ones
Who might have been your sons.

The Bearer

Could not the hands of these rebuild
That which has been destroyed?
Oh, the poor hands! that once were strong and filled
With implements of labor whereby they
Served home and country through the peaceful day.
When those who made the war stand face to face
With these slain soldiers in that unknown place
Whither the dead go, what will be the word
By dead lips spoken and by dead ears heard?
Will souls say King or Kaiser? Will souls prate
Of earthly glory in that new estate?

The Counter

One hundred thousand—
One hundred and fifty thousand—
Two hundred—

The Bearer

Can this check plough?
Can it sow? can it reap?
Can we arouse it?
Is it asleep?

Can it hear when a child cries?—
Comfort a wife?
This little metal disk
Stands for a life.

Can this check build,
Laying stone upon stone?
Once it was warm flesh
Folded on bone.

Sinew and muscle firm,
Look at it—can
This little metal check
Stand for a man?

The Counter

One—two—three—four—

Dorothy Dudley

LA RUE DE LA MONTAGNE SAINTE-GÈNEVIÈVE

I have seen an old street weeping—
Narrow, dark, ascending;
Water o'er the spires
Of a church descending;
The church thrice veiled—in rain,
In the shadow of the years,

In the grace of old design;
Dim dwellings, blind with tears,
Rotting either side
The winding passage way,
To where the river crosses
Weeping, under gray
And limpid heavens weeping.
Gardens I have seen
Through archèd doors, whose gratings
Ever cry the keen
Dim melodies of lace
Long used and rare, gardens
With an old-time grace
Vibrating, dimly trembling
In the music of the rain.
Roses I have seen drip a faint
Perfume, and lilacs train
A quivering loveliness
From door to archèd door,
Passing by in flower carts;
While waters ever pour
O'er the white stones of the fountain,
Melting icily away
Half way up the mountain;
Where to mingle tears with tears,
Their clothes misshapen, sobbing,
Two or three old women,
In wooden sabots hobbling,
Meet to fill their pitchers,
From the stream of water leaping
Through the lips, a long time parted,
Of a face grotesquely weeping—
A carven face forever weeping.

Helen Dudley

TO ONE UNKNOWN

I have seen the proudest stars
That wander on through space,
Even the sun and moon,
But not your face.

I have heard the violin,
The winds and waves rejoice
In endless minstrelsy,
Yet not your voice.

I have touched the trillium,
Pale flower of the land,
Coral, anemone,
And not your hand.

I have kissed the shining feet
Of Twilight lover-wise,
Opened the gates of Dawn—
Oh, not your eyes!

I have dreamed unwonted things,
Visions that witches brew,
Spoken with images,
Never with you.

SONG

A few more windy days
Must come and go their ways,
And we will walk
My love and I
Beneath the amber-dripping boughs.

Then on the stars we'll tread,
On purple stars and red,
And wonder why
The while we talk
Men sing so much of broken vows.

Max Eastman

ADIOGENES

A hut, and a tree,
And a hill for me,
And a piece of a weedy meadow.
I'll ask no thing,
Of God or king,
But to clear away his shadow.

IN MARCH

On a soaked fence-post a little blue-backed bird,
Opening her sweet throat, has stirred
A million music-ripples in the air
That curl and circle everywhere.
They break not shallow at my ear,
But quiver far within. Warm days are near!

AT THE AQUARIUM

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion!
They have no pathway where they go,

They flow like water to and fro.
They watch with never winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

T. S. Eliot

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
With “I have saved this afternoon for you”;
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead:
An atmosphere of Juliet’s tomb
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.

We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.
“So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
Should be resurrected only among friends—
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room.”

And so the conversation slips
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets,
Through attenuated tones of violins
Mingled with remote cornets,

And begins:

"You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends;
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find,
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends—
(For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? you are not blind!
How keen you are!)
To find a friend who has these qualities,
Who has, and gives
Those qualities upon which friendship lives:
How much it means that I say this to you—
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar!*"

Among the windings of the violins,
And the ariettes
Of cracked cornets,
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own—
Capricious monotone
That is at least one definite "false note."
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
Admire the monuments,
Discuss the late events,
Correct our watches by the public clocks;
Then sit for half an hour and drink our *bocks*.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
"Ah my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you who hold it in your hands—"
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks);
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse,
And smiles at situations which it cannot see."
I smile, of course,

And go on drinking tea.

"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
My buried life, and Paris in the spring,
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
"I am always sure that you understand
My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

"You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
You will go on, and when you have prevailed
You can say: 'At this point many a one has failed.'
But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
To give you, what can you receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

"I shall sit here, serving tea to friends . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage,
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired,
Reiterates some worn-out common song,
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
Recalling things that other people have desired.
Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down. Returning as before,
Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease,
I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?
But that's a useless question.
You hardly know when you are coming back,
You will find so much to learn."
My smile falls heavily among the bric-a-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."
My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned.
"I have been wondering frequently of late
(But our beginnings never know our ends!)
Why we have not developed into friends."
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
They all were sure our feelings would relate
So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
We must leave it now to fate.
You will write, at any rate.
Perhaps it is not too late.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression . . . dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance . . .

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
 Afternoon gray and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
 Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
 With the smoke coming down above the house tops;
 Doubtful, for quite a while
 Not knowing what to feel or if I understand
 Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon. . . .
 Would she not have the advantage, after all?
 This music is successful with a "dying fall"
 Now that we talk of dying—
 And should I have the right to smile?

Arthur Davison Ficke

MEETING

Gray-robed Wanderer in sleep . . . Wanderer . . .
 You also move among
 Those silent halls
 Dim on the shore of the unsailed deep?
 And your footfalls, yours also, Wanderer,
 Faint through those twilight corridors have rung?

Of late my eyes have seen . . . Wanderer . . .
 Amid the shadows' gloom
 Of that sleep-girdled place
 I should have known such joy could not have been—
 To see your face: and yet, Wanderer,
 What hopes seem vain beneath the night in bloom?

Wearily I awake . . . Wanderer . . .
 Your look of old despair,
 Like a dying star,
 In morning vanishes. But for all memories' sake,
 Though you are far, tonight, O Wanderer,
 Tonight come, though in silence, to the shadows there . . .

AMONG SHADOWS

In halls of sleep you wandered by,
This time so indistinguishably
I cannot remember aught of it,
Save that I know last night we met.
I know it by the cloudy thrill
That in my heart is quivering still;
And sense of loveliness forgot
Teases my fancy out of thought.
Though with the night the vision wanes,
Its haunting presence still may last—
As odor of flowers faint remains
In halls where late a queen has passed.

THE THREE SISTERS

Gone are the three, those sisters rare
With wonder-lips and eyes ashine.
One was wise and one was fair,
And one was mine.

Ye mourners, weave for the sleeping hair
Of only two, your ivy vine.
For one was wise and one was fair,
But one was mine.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

She limps with halting painful pace,
Stops, wavers, and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face
Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand like bundled cornstalks holds
The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
Abandoned to the final night.

I AM WEARY OF BEING BITTER

I am weary of being bitter and weary of being wise,
And the armor and the mask of these fall from me, after long.
I would go where the islands sleep, or where the sea-dawns rise,
And lose my bitter wisdom in the wisdom of a song.

There are magics in melodies, unknown of the sages;
The powers of purest wonder on secret wings go by.
Doubtless out of the silence of dumb preceding ages
Song woke the chaos-world—and light swept the sky.

All that we know is idle; idle is all we cherish;
Idle the will that takes loads that proclaim it strong.
For the knowledge, the strength, the burden—all shall perish:
One thing only endures, one thing only—song.

FROM "SONNETS OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER"

I am in love with high far-seeing places
That look on plains half-sunlight and half-storm,
In love with hours when from the circling faces
Veils pass, and laughing fellowship glows warm.
You who look on me with grave eyes where rapture
And April love of living burn confessed—
The Gods are good! the world lies free to capture!
Life has no walls. Oh, take me to your breast!
Take me—be with me for a moment's span!
I am in love with all unveiled faces.
I seek the wonder at the heart of man;
I would go up to the far-seeing places.
While youth is ours, turn toward me for a space
The marvel of your rapture-lighted face!

There are strange shadows fostered of the moon,
More numerous than the clear-cut shade of day. . . .
Go forth, when all the leaves whisper of June,
Into the dusk of swooping bats at play;
Or go into that late November dusk
When hills take on the noble lines of death,
And on the air the faint astringent musk
Of rotting leaves pours vaguely troubling breath.
Then shall you see shadows whereof the sun
Knows nothing—aye, a thousand shadows there
Shall leap and flicker and stir and stay and run,
Like petrels of the changing foul or fair;
Like ghosts of twilight, of the moon, of him
Whose homeland lies past each horizon's rim. . . .

LIKE HIM WHOSE SPIRIT

Like him whose spirit in the blaze of noon
Still keeps the memory of one secret star
That in the dusk of a remembered June
Thrilled the strange hour with beauty from afar—
And perilous spells of twilight snare his heart,
And wistful moods his common thoughts subdue,
And life seethes by him utterly apart—
Last night I dreamed, today I dream, of you.
Gleams downward strike; bright bubbles upward hover
Through the charmed air; far sea-winds cool my brow.
Invisible lips tell me I shall discover
Today a temple, a mystery, a vow . . .
The cycle rounds: only the false seems true.
Last night I dreamed, today I dream, of you.

John Gould Fletcher

IRRADIATIONS

I

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid the vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades;
Glint of the glittering wings of dragon-flies in the light;
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards;
Rippling, quivering flutters; repulse and surrender,
The sun brodered upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

II

O seeded grass, you army of little men
Crawling up the low slopes with quivering quick blades of steel:
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of earth,
Interlace your tangled webs tightly over my heart
And do not let me go:
For I would lie here for ever and watch with one eye
The pilgrimagings ants in your dull savage jungles,
While with the other I see the long lines of the slope
Break in mid air, a wave surprisingly arrested;
And above it, wavering, bodiless, colorless, unreal,
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.

III

Not noisily, but solemnly and pale,
In a meditative ecstasy, you entered life,
As for some strange rite, to which you alone held the clue.
Child, life did not give rude strength to you;
From the beginning you would seem to have thrown away,
As something cold and cumbersome, that armor men use against
death.
You would perchance look on death face to face and from him
wrest the secret
Whether his face wears oftenest a smile or no?
Strange, old and silent being, there is something
Infinitely vast in your intense tininess:
I think you could point out with a smile some curious star
Far off in the heavens which no man has seen before.

IV

The morning is clean and blue, and the wind blows up the clouds:
Now my thoughts, gathered from afar,

Once again in their patched armor, with rusty plumes and blunted
swords,
Move out to war.

Smoking our morning pipes we shall ride two and two
Through the woods.
For our old cause keeps us together,
And our hatred is so precious not death or defeat can break it.

God willing, we shall this day meet that old enemy
Who has given us so many a good beating.
Thank God, we have a cause worth fighting for,
And a cause worth losing, and a good song to sing!

ARIZONA POEMS

MEXICAN QUARTER

By an alley lined with tumble-down shacks,
And street-lamps askew, half-sputtering,
Feebly glimmering on gutters choked with filth, and dogs
Scratching their mangy backs:
Half-naked children are running about,
Women puff cigarettes in black doorways,
Crickets are crying.
Men slouch sullenly
Into the shadows.
Behind a hedge of cactus,
The smell of a dead horse
Mingles with the smell of tamales frying.

And a girl in a black lace shawl
Sits in a rickety chair by the square of unglazed window,
And sees the explosion of the stars
Fiercely poised on the velvet sky.
And she seems humming to herself:

"Stars, if I could reach you
(You are so very near that it seems as if I could reach you),
I would give you all to the Madonna's image
On the gray plastered altar behind the paper flowers,
So that Juan would come back to me,
And we could live again those lazy burning hours,
Forgetting the tap of my fan and my sharp words,
And I would only keep four of you—
Those two blue-white ones overhead,
To put in my ears,
And those two orange ones yonder
To fasten on my shoe-buckles."

A little further along the street
A man squats stringing a brown guitar.
The smoke of his cigarette curls round his hair,
And he too is humming, but other words:
"Think not that at your window I wait.
New love is better, the old is turned to hate.
Fate! Fate! All things pass away;
Life is forever, youth is but for a day.
Love again if you may
Before the golden moons are blown out of the sky
And the crickets die.
Babylon and Samarkand
Are mud walls in a waste of sand."

RAIN IN THE DESERT

The huge red-buttressed mesa over yonder
Is merely a far-off temple where the sleepy sun is burning
Its altar fires of pinyon and toyon for the day.

The old priests sleep, white-shrouded;
Their pottery whistles lie beside them, the prayer-sticks closely
feathered.
On every mummied face there glows a smile.

The sun is rolling slowly
Beneath the sluggish folds of the sky-serpents,
Coiling, uncoiling, blue black, sparked with fires.

The old dead priests
Feel in the thin dried earth that is heaped about them,
Above the smell of scorching, oozing pinyon,
The acrid smell of rain.

And now the showers
Surround the mesa like a troop of silver dancers:
Shaking their rattles, stamping, chanting, roaring,
Whirling, extinguishing the last red wisp of light.

THE BLUE SYMPHONY

I

The darkness rolls upward.
The thick darkness carries with it
Rain and a ravel of cloud.
The sun comes forth upon earth.

Palely the dawn
Leaves me facing timidly
Old gardens sunken:
And in the gardens is water.

Sombre wreck-autumnal leaves;
Shadowy roofs
In the blue mist,
And a willow-branch that is broken.

O old pagodas of my soul, how you glittered across green trees!

Blue and cool:
Blue, tremulously,
Blow faint puffs of smoke
Across sombre pools.
The damp green smell of rotted wood;
And a heron that cries from out the water.

II

Through the upland meadows
I go alone.
For I dreamed of someone last night
Who is waiting for me.

Flower and blossom, tell me do you know of her?
Have the rocks hidden her voice?
They are very blue and still.

Long upward road that is leading me,
Light hearted I quit you,
For the long loose ripples of the meadow-grass
Invite me to dance upon them.

Quivering grass,
Daintily poised
For her foot's tripping.

O blown clouds, could I only race up like you!
Oh, the last slopes that are sun-drenched and steep!

Look, the sky!
Across black valleys
Rise blue-white aloft
Jagged unwrinkled mountains, ranges of death.

Solitude. Silence.

III

One chuckles by the brook for me:
One rages under the stone.
One makes a spout of his mouth,
One whispers—one is gone.

One over there on the water
Spreads cold ripples
For me
Enticingly.

The vast dark trees
Flow like blue veils
Of tears
Into the water.

Sour sprites,
Moaning and chuckling,
What have you hidden from me?

“In the palace of the blue stone she lies forever
Bound hand and foot.”

Was it the wind
That rattled the reeds together?

Dry reeds,
A faint shiver in the grasses.

IV

On the left hand there is a temple:
And a palace on the right-hand side.
Foot-passengers in scarlet
Pass over the glittering tide.

Under the bridge
The old river flows
Low and monotonous
Day after day.

I have heard and have seen
All the news that has been:
Autumn's gold and Spring's green!

Now in my palace
I see foot-passengers
Crossing the river,
Pilgrims of autumn
In the afternoons.

Lotus pools;
Petals in the water:
Such are my dreams.

For me silks are outspread.
I take my ease, unthinking.

v

And now the lowest pine-branch
Is drawn across the disk of the sun.
Old friends who will forget me soon,
I must go on
Towards those blue death mountains
I have forgot so long.

In the marsh grasses
There lies forever
My last treasure,
With the hope of my heart.

The ice is glazing over;
Torn lanterns flutter,
On the leaves is snow.

In the frosty evening
Toll the old bell for me
Once, in the sleepy temple.
Perhaps my soul will hear.

Afterglow:
Before the stars peep
I shall creep into the darkness.

F. S. Flint

POEMS IN UNRHYMED CADENCE

I

London, my beautiful,
It is not the sunset
Nor the pale green sky
Shimmering through the curtain
Of the silver birch,
Nor the quietness;
It is not the hopping
Of the little birds
Upon the lawn,
Nor the darkness
Stealing over all things
That moves me.

But as the moon creeps slowly
Over the tree-tops
Among the stars,
I think of her
And the glow her passing
Sheds on men.

London, my beautiful,
I will climb
Into the branches
To the moonlit tree-tops,
That my blood may be cooled
By the wind.

II

Under the lily shadow
And the gold
And the blue and mauve
That the whin and the lilac
Pour down on the water,
The fishes quiver.

Over the green cold leaves
And the rippled silver
And the tarnished copper
Of its neck and beak,
Toward the deep black water
Beneath the arches,
The swan floats slowly.

Into the dark of the arch the swan floats
And the black depth of my sorrow
Bears a white rose of flame.

III—IN THE GARDEN

The grass is beneath my head;
And I gaze
At the thronging stars
In the aisles of night.

They fall . . . they fall. . . .
I am overwhelmed,
And afraid.

Each little leaf of the aspen
Is caressed by the wind,
And each is crying.

And the perfume
Of invisible roses
Deepens the anguish.

Let a strong mesh of roots
Feed the crimson of roses
Upon my heart;
And then fold over the hollow
Where all the pain was.

Moireen Fox

LIADAIN TO CURITHIR

Liadain and Curithir were two poets who lived in Ireland in the seventh century. They fell in love, but while Curithir was absent making preparations for their marriage, Liadain, for some unexplained reason, took the vows of a nun. Curithir in despair became a monk. At first they continued to see each other, but when this led to the breaking of their vows, Curithir left Liadain to spend his life in penance and thus save his soul.

I

If I had known how narrow a prison is love,
Never would I have given the width of the skies
In return for thy kiss, O Curithir, thou my grief!

If I had known love's poverty, I would have given
Dúns and forests and ploughlands and begged my bread:
For now I have lost the earth and the stars and my soul.

If I had known the strength of love, I would have laid
The ridge of the world in ashes to stay his feet:
I would have cried on a stronger lord—on Death.

II

I, that was wont to pass by all unmoved
As the long ridge of the tide sweeps to the shore,
Am broken at last on the crags of a pitiless love.

I, who was wont to see men pale at my glance,
Like the quivering grass am shaken beneath thine eyes;
At thy touch my spirit is captive, my will is lost.

I would darken the sun and moon to break from thy love,
I would shatter the world to win thee again to my side.
O aching madness of love! Have the dead repose?
Or wilt thou tear my heart in the close-shut grave?

III

I have done with blame, I have risen from the cold earth
Where night and day my forehead has known the clay.
With faltering steps I have passed out to the sun.

Now in the sight of all I stand, that all may know
(For I myself will praise thee and prove their words)
How great was thy wisdom in turning away from me.

Who that has drunken wine will keep the lees?
Who that has slain a man will wait for revenge?
Who that has had his desire of a woman will stay?

Farewell, O Curithir, let thy soul be saved!
I have not found a thing that is dearer to thee.
In the eyes of God is it priceless? Who can say!

My soul is a thing of little worth unto God:
 Of less worth unto thee, O Curithir, than my love.
 And unto me so small I flung it beneath thy feet.

IV

If the dark earth hold a Power that is not God
 I pray It to bind up memory lest I die.

There was a day when Curithir loved me, now it is gone.
 It was I that sundered his love from me, I myself;
 Or it was God who struck me with madness and mocked.

If the dark earth hold a Power that is not God
 I pray It to hide me for ever away from His face.

V

All things are outworn now—grief is dead,
 And passion has fallen from me like a withered leaf.
 Little it were to me now though Curithir were beside me:
 Though he should pass I would not turn my head.
 My heart is like a stone in my body.
 All I have grasped I loose again from my hands.

Florence Kiper Frank

THE JEWISH CONSCRIPT

*There are nearly a quarter of a million Jews in the Czar's army alone.—
 Newspaper clipping.*

They have dressed me up in a soldier's dress,
 With a rifle in my hand,
 And have sent me bravely forth to shoot
 My own in a foreign land.

Oh, many shall die for the fields of their homes,
And many in conquest wild;
But I shall die for the fatherland
That murdered my little child.

How many hundreds of years ago—
The nations wax and cease!—
Did the God of our fathers doom us to bear
The flaming message of peace!

We are the mock and the sport of time!
Yet why should I complain!—
For a Jew that they hung on the bloody cross,
He also died in vain.

THE MOVIES

She knows a cheap release
From worry and from pain—
The cowboys spur their horses
Over the unending plain.

The tenement rooms are small;
Their walls press on the brain.
Oh, the dip of the galloping horses
On the limitless, wind-swept plain!

YOU

I go my way complacently,
As self-respecting persons should.
You are to me the rebel thought,
You are the wayward rebel mood.

What shall we share who are separate?
We part—as alien persons should.
But oh, I have need of the rebel thought,
And a wicked urge to the rebel mood!

Robert Frost

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

AFTER APPLE-PICKING

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,

And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

MY NOVEMBER GUEST

My Sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.
Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow;
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

MOWING

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—
And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
Or easy cold at the hand of fay or elf:
Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak
To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows—
Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
(Pale orchises)—and scared a bright green snake.
The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.
My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

STORM FEAR

When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,

"Come out! Come out!"—
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length—
How drifts are piled,
Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away,
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.

GOING FOR WATER

The well was dry beside the door,
And so we went with pail and can
Across the fields behind the house
To seek the brook if still it ran;

Not loth to have excuse to go,
Because the autumn eve was fair
(Though chill) because the fields were ours,
And by the brook our woods were there.

We ran as if to meet the moon
That slowly dawned behind the trees,
The barren boughs without the leaves,
Without the birds, without the breeze.

But once within the wood, we paused
Like gnomes that hid us from the moon,
Ready to run to hiding new
With laughter when she found us soon.

Each laid on other a staying hand
To listen ere we dared to look,
And in the hush we joined to make
We heard—we knew we heard—the brook.

A note as from a single place,
A slender tinkling fall that made
Now drops that floated on the pool
Like pearls, and now a silver blade.

THE CODE—HEROICS

There were three in the meadow by the brook,
Gathering up windrows, piling haycocks up,
With an eye always lifted toward the west,
Where an irregular, sun-bordered cloud
Darkly advanced with a perpetual dagger
Flickering across its bosom. Suddenly
One helper, thrusting pitchfork in the ground,
Marched himself off the field and home. One stayed.
The town-bred farmer failed to understand.

What was there wrong?

Something you said just now.

What did I say?

About our taking pains.

To cock the hay?—because it's going to shower?

I said that nearly half an hour ago.

I said it to myself as much as you.

You didn't know. But James is one big fool.
He thought you meant to find fault with his work.
That's what the average farmer would have meant.
James had to take his time to chew it over
Before he acted; he's just got round to act.

He *is* a fool if that's the way he takes me.

Don't let it bother you. You've found out something.
The hand that knows his business won't be told
To do work faster or better—those two things.
I'm as particular as anyone:
Most likely I'd have served you just the same:
But I know you don't understand our ways.
You were just talking what was in your mind,
What was in all our minds, and you weren't hinting.
Tell you a story of what happened once.
I was up here in Salem, at a man's
Named Sanders, with a gang of four or five,
Doing the haying. No one liked the boss.
He was one of the kind sports call a spider,
All wiry arms and legs that spread out wavy
From a humped body nigh as big as a biscuit.
But work!—that man could work, especially
If by so doing he could get more work
Out of his hired help. I'm not denying
He was hard on himself: I couldn't find
That he kept any hours—not for himself.
Day-light and lantern-light were one to him:
I've heard him pounding in the barn all night.
But what he liked was someone to encourage.
Them that he couldn't lead he'd get behind
And drive, the way you can, you know, in mowing—
Keep at their heels and threaten to mow their legs off.
I'd seen about enough of his bulling tricks—
We call that bulling. I'd been watching him.
So when he paired off with me in the hayfield
To load the load, thinks I, look out for trouble!
I built the load and topped it off; old Sanders
Combed it down with the rake and said, "O. K."
Everything went right till we reached the barn
With a big take to empty in a bay.
You understand that meant the easy job
For the man up on top of throwing down

The hay and rolling it off wholesale,
Where, on a mow, it would have been slow lifting.
You wouldn't think a fellow'd need much urging
Under those circumstances, would you now?
But the old fool seizes his fork in both hands,
And looking up bewhiskered out of the pit,
Shouts like an army captain, "Let her come!"
Thinks I, d'ye mean it? "What was that you said?"
I asked out loud so's there'd be no mistake.
"Did you say, let her come?" "Yes, let her come."
He said it over, but he said it softer.
Never you say a thing like that to a man,
Not if he values what he is. God, I'd as soon
Murdered him as left out his middle name.
I'd built the load and knew just where to find it.
Two or three forkfuls I picked lightly round for
Like meditating, and then I just dug in
And dumped the rackful on him in ten lots.
I looked over the side once in the dust
And caught sight of him treading-water-like,
Keeping his head above. "Damn ye," I says,
"That gets ye!" He squeaked like a squeezed rat.

That was the last I saw or heard of him.
I cleaned the rack and drove out to cool off.
As I sat mopping the hayseed from my neck,
And sort of waiting to be asked about it,
One of the boys sings out, "Where's the old man?"
"I left him in the barn, under the hay.
If you want him you can go and dig him out."
They realized from the way I swobbed my neck
More than was needed, something must be up.
They headed for the barn—I stayed where I was.
They told me afterward: First they forked hay,
A lot of it, out into the barn floor.
Nothing! They listened for him. Not a rustle!

I guess they thought I'd spiked him in the temple
Before I buried him, else I couldn't have managed.
They excavated more. "Go keep his wife
Out of the barn."

Some one looked in a window;
And curse me, if he wasn't in the kitchen,
Slumped way down in a chair, with both his feet
Stuck in the oven, the hottest day that summer.
He looked so mad in back, and so disgusted
There was no one that dared to stir him up
Or let him know that he was being looked at.
Apparently I hadn't buried him
(I may have knocked him down), but just my trying
To bury him had hurt his dignity.
He had gone to the house so's not to face me.
He kept away from us all afternoon.
We tended to his hay. We saw him out
After a while picking peas in the garden:
He couldn't keep away from doing something.

Weren't you relieved to find he wasn't dead?

No!—and yet I can't say: it's hard to tell.
I went about to kill him fair enough.

You took an awkward way. Did he discharge you?

Discharge me? No! He knew I did just right.

Hamlin Garland

TO A CAPTIVE CRANE

Ho, brother! Art thou prisoned too?
 Is thy heart hot with restless pain?
 I heard the call thy bugle blew
 Here by the bleak and chilling main
 (Whilst round me shaven parks are spread
 And cindered drives wind on and on);
 And at thy cry, thy lifted head,
 My gladdened heart was westward drawn.

O splendid bird! your trumpet brings
 To my lone heart the prairie springs.

THE MOUNTAINS ARE A LONELY FOLK

The mountains they are silent folk
 They stand afar—alone,
 And the clouds that kiss their brows at night
 Hear neither sigh nor groan.
 Each bears him in his ordered place
 As soldiers do, and bold and high
 They fold their forests round their feet
 And bolster up the sky.

MAGIC

Within my hand I hold
 A piece of lichen-spotted stone—
 Each fleck red-gold—
 And with closed eyes I hear the moan
 Of solemn winds round naked crags
 Of Colorado's mountains. The snow

Lies deep about me. Gray and old
Hags of cedars, gaunt and bare,
With streaming, tangled hair,
Snarl endlessly. White-winged and proud,
With stately step and queenly air,
A glittering, cool and silent cloud
 Upon me sails.
 The wind wails,
And from the cañon stern and steep
I hear the furious waters leap.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

COLOR

A blue-black Nubian plucking oranges
At Jaffa by a sea of malachite,
In red tarboosh, green sash, and flowing white
Burnous—among the shadowy memories
That haunt me yet by these bleak northern seas
He lives for ever in my eyes' delight,
Bizarre, superb in young immortal might—
A god of old barbaric mysteries.

Maybe he lived a life of lies and lust,
Maybe his bones are now but scattered dust;
Yet, for a moment he was life supreme
Exultant and unchallenged: and my rhyme
Would set him safely out of reach of time
In that old heaven where things are what they seem.

OBLIVION

Near the great pyramid, unshadowed, white,
With apex piercing the white noon-day blaze.
Swathed in white robes beneath the blinding rays
Lie sleeping Bedouins drenched in white-hot light.
About them, searing to the tingling sight,
Swims the white dazzle of the desert ways
Where the sense shudders, witless and adaze,
In a white void with neither depth nor height.

Within the black core of the pyramid,
Beneath the weight of sunless centuries,
Lapt in dead night King Cheops lies asleep:
Yet in the darkness of his chamber hid
He knows no black oblivion more deep
Than that blind white oblivion of noon skies.

TENANTS

Suddenly, out of dark and leafy ways,
We came upon the little house asleep
In cold blind stillness, shadowless and deep,
In the white magic of the full moon-blaze:
Strangers without the gate, we stood agaze,
Fearful to break that quiet, and to creep
Into the home that had been ours to keep
Through a long year of happy nights and days.

So unfamiliar in the white moon-gleam,
So old and ghostly like a house of dream
It stood, that over us there stole the dread
That even as we watched it, side by side,
The ghosts of lovers, who had lived and died
Within its walls, were sleeping in our bed.

GOLD

All day the mallet thudded far below
My garret, in an old ramshackle shed
Where ceaselessly, with stiffly nodding head
And rigid motions ever to and fro
A figure like a puppet in a show
Before the window moved till day was dead,
Beating out gold to earn his daily bread,
Beating out thin fine gold-leaf blow on blow.

And I within my garret all day long
Unto that ceaseless thudding tuned my song,
Beating out golden words in tune and time
To that dull thudding, rhyme on golden rhyme.
But in my dreams all night, in that dark shed,
With aching arms I beat fine gold for bread.

ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Against the green flame of the hawthorn-tree,
His scarlet tunic burns;
And livelier than the green sap's mantling glee
The spring fire tingles through him headily
As quivering he turns

And stammers out the old amazing tale
Of youth and April weather;
While she, with half-breathed jests that, sobbing, fail,
Sits, tight-lipped, quaking, eager-eyed and pale
Beneath her purple feather.

BATTLE

THE GOING

He's gone.
I do not understand.
I only know
That as he turned to go
And waved his hand,
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone:
And I was dazzled by a sunset glow,
And he was gone.

THE JOKE

He'd even have his joke
While we were sitting tight,
And so he needs must poke
His silly head in sight
To whisper some new jest
Chortling. But as he spoke
A rifle cracked . . .
And now God knows when I shall hear the rest!

IN THE AMBULANCE

"Two rows of cabbages,
Two of curly-greens,
Two rows of early peas,
Two of kidney-beans."

That's what he is muttering,
Making such a song,
Keeping other chaps awake,
The whole night long.

THE NEW POETRY

Both his legs are shot away,
And his head is light;
So he keeps on muttering
All the blessed night:

“Two rows of cabbages,
Two of curly-greens,
Two rows of early peas,
Two of kidney-beans.”

HIT

Out of the sparkling sea
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,
Basking, and watching lazily
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and through,
Till every particle glowed clean and new
And slowly seemed to turn
To lucent amber in a world of blue . . .

I felt a sudden wrench—
A trickle of warm blood—
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench.

THE HOUSEWIFE

She must go back, she said,
Because she'd not had time to make the bed.
We'd hurried her away
So roughly . . . and for all that we could say,
She broke from us, and passed
Into the night, shells falling thick and fast.

HILL-BORN

I sometimes wonder if it's really true
I ever knew
Another life
Than this unending strife
With unseen enemies in lowland mud;
And wonder if my blood
Thrilled ever to the tune
Of clean winds blowing through an April noon
Mile after sunny mile
On the green ridges of the Windy Gile.

THE FEAR

I do not fear to die
'Neath the open sky,
To meet death in the fight
Face to face, upright.

But when at last we creep
Into a hole to sleep,
I tremble, cold with dread,
Lest I wake up dead.

BACK

They ask me where I've been,
And what I've done and seen.
But what can I reply
Who know it wasn't I,
But someone, just like me,
Who went across the sea
And with my head and hands
Slew men in foreign lands . . .
Though I must bear the blame
Because he bore my name.

Richard Butler Glaenzer

STAR-MAGIC

Though your beauty be a flower
Of unimagined loveliness,
It cannot lure me tonight;
For I am all spirit.

As in the billowy oleander,
Full-bloomed,
Each blossom is all but lost
In the next—
One flame in a glow
Of green-veined rhodonite;
So is heaven a crystal magnificence
Of stars
Powdered lightly with blue.

For this one night
My spirit has turned honey-moth
And has made of the stars
Its flowers.

So all uncountable are the stars
That heaven shimmers as a web,
Bursting with light
From beyond,
A light exquisite,
Immeasurable!

For this one night
My spirit has dared, and been caught
In the web of the stars.

Though your beauty were a net
Of unimagined power,
It could not hold me tonight;
For I am all spirit.

Douglas Goldring

VOYAGES

I

To come so soon to this imagined dark—
More velvet-deep than any midnight park!
Palaces hem me in, with blind black walls;
The water is hushed for a voice that never calls.
My gondolier sways silently over his oar.

II

*At St. Blaise, à la Zuecca! Oh, my dear,
Laugh your gentle laughter! This old land,
From Provence to Paris—never fear—
All the heart can feel will understand.*

A small town, a white town,
A town for you and me—
With a *Café Glacier* in the square,
And schooners at the quay;
And the *terrasse* of a small hotel
That looks upon the sea!
There gay sounds and sweet sounds
And sounds of peace come through:
The cook sings in the kitchen,
The pink-foot ring-doves coo,
And Julien brings the Pernods
That are bad for me and you.

*At St. Blaise, à la Zuecca! Oh, my dear,
Laugh your gentle laughter! This old land,
From Provence to Paris—never fear—
All the heart can feel will understand.*

III

Waves lap the beach, pines stretch to meet the sea;
A pale light on the horizon lingers and shines,
That might shine round the Graal: and we
Stand very silent, underneath the pines.

O swift expresses for the spirit's flight!
Sometimes the moon is like a maid I know,
Looking roguishly back, and flying forward—so
I follow, flashing after. Blessed night!

IV

Do you remember, have you been these ways,
Dreaming or waking, after sunny days;
Sailed, in a moment, to imagined lands—
With one to love you, holding both your hands—
To old hot countries where the warm grape clings,
And an old, musical language strikes the ear
Like a caress, most exquisite to hear—
Your soul the voyager and your heart her wings?

Hermann Hagedorn

EARLY MORNING AT BARGIS

Clear air and grassy lea,
Stream-song and cattle-bell—
Dear man, what fools are we
In prison-walls to dwell!

To live our days apart
From green things and wide skies,
And let the wistful heart
Be cut and crushed with lies!

Bright peaks!—And suddenly
Light floods the placid dell,
The grass-tops brush my knee:
A good crop it will be,
So all is well!

O man, what fools are we
In prison-walls to dwell!

DOORS

Like a young child who to his mother's door
Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
A door that will not open, sick and numb,
I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing—hark!—
Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

DEPARTURE

My true love from her pillow rose
And wandered down the summer lane.
She left her house to the wind's carouse,
And her chamber wide to the rain.

She did not stop to don her coat,
 She did not stop to smooth her bed—
 But out she went in glad content
 There where the bright path led.

She did not feel the beating storm,
 But fled like a sunbeam, white and frail,
 To the sea, to the air, somewhere, somewhere—
 I have not found her trail.

BROADWAY

How like the stars are these white, nameless faces—
 These far innumerable burning coals!
 This pale procession out of stellar spaces,
 This Milky Way of souls!
 Each in its own bright nebulæ enfurled,
 Each face, dear God, a world!

I fling my gaze out through the silent night:
 In those far stars, what gardens, what high halls,
 Has mortal yearning built for its delight,
 What chasms and what walls?
 What quiet mansions where a soul may dwell?
 What heaven and what hell?

Thomas Hardy

SHE HEARS THE STORM

There was a time in former years—
 While my roof-tree was his—
 When I should have been distressed by fears
 At such a night as this.

I should have murmured anxiously,
 "The pricking rain strikes cold;
 His road is bare of hedge or tree,
 And he is getting old."

But now the fitful chimney-roar,
 The drone of Thorncombe trees,
 The From in flood upon the moor,
 The mud of Mellstock Leaze,

The candle slanting sooty wick'd,
 The thuds upon the thatch,
 The eaves-drops on the window flicked,
 The clacking garden-hatch,

And what they mean to wayfarers,
 I scarcely heed or mind;
 He has won that storm-tight roof of hers
 Which Earth grants all her kind.

THE VOICE

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,
 Saying that now you are not as you were
 When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
 But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,
 Standing as when I drew near to the town
 Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
 Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness
 Travelling across the wet mead to me here,
 You being ever consigned to existlessness,
 Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,
Leaves around me falling,
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward
And the woman calling.

IN THE MOONLIGHT

"O lonely workman, standing there
In a dream, why do you stare and stare
At her grave, as no other grave there were?

"If your great gaunt eyes so importune
Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold moon,
Maybe you'll raise her phantom soon!"

"Why, fool, it is what I would rather see
Than all the living folk there be;
But alas, there is no such joy for me!"

"Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,
Through good and evil, through rain and drought,
And when she passed, all your sun went out?"

"Nay: she was the woman I did not love,
Whom all the others were ranked above,
Whom during her life I thought nothing of."

THE MAN HE KILLED

"Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I—
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown."

Ralph Hodgson

THE MYSTERY

He came and took me by the hand
Up to a red rose tree,
He kept His meaning to Himself
But gave a rose to me.

I did not pray Him to lay bare
The mystery to me;
Enough the rose was Heaven to smell,
And His own face to see.

THREE POEMS

I

Babylon—where I go dreaming
When I weary of to-day,
Weary of a world grown gray.

II

God loves an idle rainbow,
No less than laboring seas.

III

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
Lie mirrored on her sea,
Confounding her astronomers,
But, oh, delighting me!

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

Horace Holley

CREATIVE

Renew the vision of delight
By vigil, praise and prayer,
Till every sinew leaps in might
And every sense is fair.

TWILIGHT AT VERSAILLES

Unfold for men, O God, love's true, creative day,
To flower our barren souls by mellow sun and noon:
The glory of old thought is still, and cold, and gray,
Like gardens unrenewed beneath the sterile moon.

LOVERS

Whate'er our joy compelled, men's praise and blame fall hollow,
A voice upon the winds that drown it as they blow:
So fair a vision led, our thought was all to follow;
So strong a passion urged, our will was all to go.

Helen Hoyt

ELLIS PARK

Little park that I pass through,
I carry off a piece of you
Every morning hurrying down
To my work-day in the town;
Carry you for country there
To make the city ways more fair.
I take your trees,
And your breeze,
Your greenness,
Your cleanness,
Some of your shade, some of your sky,
Some of your calm as I go by;
Your flowers to trim
The pavements grim;
Your space for room in the jostled street
And grass for carpet to my feet.

Your fountains take and sweet bird calls
To sing me from my office walls.
All that I can see
I carry off with me.
But you never miss my theft,
So much treasure you have left.
As I find you, fresh at morning,
So I find you, home returning—
Nothing lacking from your grace.
All your riches wait in place
For me to borrow
On the morrow.

Do you hear this praise of you,
Little park that I pass through?

THE NEW-BORN

I have heard them in the night—
The cry of their fear,
Because there is no light,
Because they do not hear
Familiar sounds and feel the familiar arm,
And they awake alone.
Yet they have never known
Danger or harm.
What is their dread?—
This dark about their bed?
But they are so lately come
Out of the dark womb
Where they were safely kept.
That blackness was good;
And the silence of that solitude
Wherein they slept
Was kind.
Where did they find

Knowledge of death?
Caution of darkness and cold?
These—of the little, new breath—
Have they a prudence so old?

RAIN AT NIGHT

Are you awake? Do you hear the rain?
How rushingly it strikes upon the ground,
And on the roof, and the wet window-pane!
Sometimes I think it is a comfortable sound,
Making us feel how safe and snug we are:
Closing us off in this dark, away from the dark outside.
The rest of the world seems dim tonight, mysterious and far.
Oh, there is no world left! Only darkness, darkness stretching wide
And full of the blind rain's immeasurable fall!

How nothing must we seem unto this ancient thing!
How nothing unto the earth—and we so small!
Oh, wake, wake!—do you not feel my hands cling?
One day it will be raining as it rains tonight; the same wind blow—
Raining and blowing on this house wherein we lie: but you and I—
We shall not hear, we shall not ever know.
O love, I had forgot that we must die.

THE LOVER SINGS OF A GARDEN

Oh, beautiful are the flowers of your garden,
The flowers of your garden are fair:
Blue flowers of your eyes
And dusk flower of your hair;
Dew flower of your mouth
And peony-budded breasts,
And the flower of the curve of your hand
Where my hand rests.

SINCE I HAVE FELT THE SENSE OF DEATH

Since I have felt the sense of death,
 Since I have borne its dread, its fear—
 Oh, how my life has grown more dear
 Since I have felt the sense of death!
 Sorrows are good, and cares are small,
 Since I have known the loss of all.

Since I have felt the sense of death,
 And death forever at my side—
 Oh, how the world has opened wide
 Since I have felt the sense of death!
 My hours are jewels that I spend,
 For I have seen the hours end.

Since I have felt the sense of death,
 Since I have looked on that black night—
 My inmost brain is fierce with light
 Since I have felt the sense of death.
 O dark, that made my eyes to see!
 O death, that gave my life to me!

Ford Madox Hueffer

ANTWERP

I

Gloom!
 An October like November;
 August a hundred thousand hours,
 And all September,
 A hundred thousand, dragging sunlit days,

And half October like a thousand years . . .

And doom!

That then was Antwerp . . .

In the name of God,

How could they do it?

Those souls that usually dived

Into the dirty caverns of mines;

Who usually hived

In whitened hovels; under ragged poplars;

Who dragged muddy shovels, over the grassy mud,

Lumbering to work over the greasy sods . . .

Those men there, with the appearance of clods

Were the bravest men that a usually listless priest of God

Ever shrived . . .

And it is not for us to make them an anthem.

If we found words there would come no wind that would fan them

To a tune that the trumpets might blow it,

Shrill through the heaven that's ours or yet Allah's,

Or the wide halls of any Valhallas.

We can make no such anthem. So that all that is ours

For inditing in sonnets, pantoums, elegiacs, or lays

Is this:

"In the name of God, how could they do it?"

II

For there is no new thing under the sun,

Only this uncomely man with a smoking gun

In the gloom. . . .

What the devil will he gain by it?

Digging a hole in the mud and standing all day in the rain by it

Waiting his doom;

The sharp blow, the swift outpouring of the blood

Till the trench of gray mud

Is turned to a brown purple drain by it.

Well, there have been scars

Won in many wars,
Punic,
Lacedæmonian, wars of Napoleon, wars for faith, wars for honor,
for love, for possession,
But this Belgian man in his ugly tunic,
His ugly round cap, shooting on, in a sort of obsession,
Overspreading his miserable land,
Standing with his wet gun in his hand. . . .
Doom!
He finds that in a sudden scrimmage,
And lies, an unsightly lump on the sodden grass . . .
An image that shall take long to pass!

III

For the white-limbed heroes of Hellas ride by upon their horses
Forever through our brains.
The heroes of Cressy ride by upon their stallions;
And battalions and battalions and battalions—
The Old Guard, the Young Guard, the men of Minden and of
Waterloo,
Pass, for ever staunch,
Stand, for ever true;
And the small man with the large paunch,
And the gray coat, and the large hat, and the hands behind the
back,
Watches them pass
In our minds for ever. . . .
But that clutter of sodden corpses
On the sodden Belgian grass—
That is a strange new beauty.

IV

With no especial legends of marchings or triumphs or duty,
Assuredly that is the way of it,
The way of beauty. . . .

FORD MADOX HUEFFER

And that is the highest word you can find to say of
For you cannot praise it with words
Compounded of lyres and swords,
But the thought of the gloom and the rain
And the ugly coated figure, standing beside a drain,
Shall eat itself into your brain:
And you will say of all heroes, "They fought like the Belgians!"
And you will say, "He wrought like a Belgian his fate out of
gloom."
And you will say, "He bought like a Belgian
His doom."
And that shall be an honorable name;
"Belgian" shall be an honorable word;
As honorable as the fame of the sword,
As honorable as the mention of the many-chorded lyre,
And his old coat shall seem as beautiful as the fabrics woven in
Tyre.

v

And what in the world did they bear it for?
I don't know.
And what in the world did they dare it for?
Perhaps that is not for the likes of me to understand.
They could very well have watched a hundred legions go
Over their fields and between their cities
Down into more southerly regions.
They could very well have let the legions pass through their woods,
And have kept their lives and their wives and their children and
cattle and goods.
I don't understand.
Was it just love of their land?
Oh, poor dears!
Can any man so love his land?
Give them a thousand thousand pities
And rivers and rivers of tears
To wash off the blood from the cities of Flanders.

VI

This is Charing Cross;
It is midnight;
There is a great crowd
And no light—
A great crowd, all black, that hardly whispers aloud.
Surely, that is a dead woman—a dead mother!
She has a dead face;
She is dressed all in black;
She wanders to the book-stall and back,
At the back of the crowd;
And back again and again back,
She sways and wanders.

This is Charing Cross;
It is one o'clock.
There is still a great cloud, and very little light;
Immense shafts of shadows over the black crowd
That hardly whispers aloud. . . .
And now! . . . That is another dead mother,
And there is another and another and another. . . .
And little children, all in black,
All with dead faces, waiting in all the waiting-places,
Wandering from the doors of the waiting-room
In the dim gloom.
These are the women of Flanders:
They await the lost.
They await the lost that shall never leave the dock;
They await the lost that shall never again come by the train
To the embraces of all these women with dead faces;
They await the lost who lie dead in trench and barrier and fosse,
In the dark of the night.
This is Charing Cross; it is past one of the clock;
There is very little light.

There is so much pain.

L'Envoi:

And it was for this that they endured this gloom;
 This October like November,
 That August like a hundred thousand hours,
 And that September,
 A hundred thousand dragging sunlit days
 And half October like a thousand years. . . .
 Oh, poor dears!

Scharmél Iris

AFTER THE MARTYRDOM

They threw a stone, you threw a stone,
 I threw a stone that day.
 Although their sharpness bruised his flesh
 He had no word to say.

But for the moan he did not make
 To-day I make my moan;
 And for the stone I threw at him
 My heart must bear a stone.

LAMENT

Lady, your heart has turned to dust,
 Your wail is taken by the sea.
 The wind is knocking at my heart,
 And will not let me be.

Your moaning smites me in my dreams,
 And I must sorrow till I die.
 And I shall rove, and I shall weep,
 Till in the grave I lie.

ITERATION

My son is dead and I am going blind,
And in the Ishmael-wind of grief
I tremble like a leaf;
I have no mind for any word you say:
My son is dead and I am going blind.

EARLY NIGHTFALL

The pale day drowns on the western steep;
The toiler faints along the marge of sleep
Within the sunset-press, incarnadine,
The sun, a peasant, tramples out his wine.

Ah, scattered gold rests on the twilight streams;
The poppy opes her scarlet purse of dreams.
Night with the sickle-moon engarners wheat,
And binds the sheaves of stars beneath her feet.

Rest, weary heart, and every flight-worn bird!
The brooklet of the meadow lies unstirred.
Sleep, every soul, against a comrade breast!
God grant you peace, and guard you in your rest!

Orrick Johns

SONGS OF DELIVERANCE

I—THE SONG OF YOUTH

This is the song of youth,
This is the cause of myself;
I knew my father well and he was a fool,
Therefore will I have my own foot in the path before I take a step;

I will go only into new lands,
And I will walk on no plank-walks.
The horses of my family are wind-broken,
And the dogs are old,
And the guns rusty;
I will make me a new bow from an ash-tree,
And cut up the homestead into arrows.

Behold how people stand around!
(There are always crowds of people standing around,
Whose legs have no knees)—
While the engineers put up steel work . . .
Is it something to catch the sunlight,
Jewelry and gew-gaw?
I have no time to wait for them to build bridges for me;
Where awful the gap seems stretching there is no gap,
Leaping I take it at once from a thought to a thought.
I can no more walk in the stride of other men
Than be father of their children.

My treasure lured like a bright star,
And I went to it young and desirous.
Lo, as it stood there in its great chests,
The wise men came up with the keys,
Crying, "Blasphemy, blasphemy!"
For I had broken the locks. . . .
And when the procession went waving to a funeral,
They cried it again;
For I stayed in my home and spoke truth about the dead.

Much did I learn waiting in my youth;
At the door of a great man I waited on one foot and then on the
other.
The files passed in and out before me to the antechamber, for at
that door I was not favored:
(O costly preferment!)
Yet I watched them coming and going,

And I learned the great man by heart from the stories on their faces.

When presently the retainers arrived, one above the other in a row, saying:

"The great man is ready,"
I had long been a greater than he.

This is the reason for myself:
When I used to go in the races, I had but one prayer,
And I went first before the judges, saying;
"Give everyone a distance, such as you consider best;
I will run scratch."

II—VIRGINS

I have had one fear in my life—
When I was young I feared virgins;
But I do not any more. . . .
By contact with them I learn that each is a center,
And has a period of brightness,
And stands epitome in that brief space
Of the Universe!
Ah, the ephemeral eternal!
In virgins' eyes I would live reflected as in a globe,
And know myself purer than crystal.

III—NO PREY AM I

No prey am I of poor thoughts.
I leave all of my followers; I tire quickly of them;
I send them away from me when they ask too much; for though
I live alone
Still will I live, night and day . . .

There is not anything in me save mutation and laughter;
My laughter is like a sword,
Like the piston-rod that defies oceans and grades.

When I labor it is a song of battle in the broad noon;
For behold the muscles of a man—
They are piston-rods; they are cranes, hydraulic presses, powder-
magazines:
But though my body be as beautiful as a hill crowned with flowers
I will despise it and make it obey me . . .

Is the old love dead?
Then I shall await the new,
To embrace it more sturdily and passionately than ever the old;
And break it under the white force of my laughter
Until it lies passive in my arms.
There is nothing in me but renewal;
If my friend bow his head over me I soon surprise him with shouts
of joy:

For in an instant I am again what I was,
Only with a few moments more of the infusion of earth;
I tell him, the griever, to follow me and he is a griever no more;
He raises his head and must follow.
Yet it is my battle, not his battle,
For in me I absorb others . . .
I hail parties and partisans from afar;
Not men but parties are my comrades,
Not persons but nations are my associates.
I shake the hand of nations;
For I am a nation and a party, and majorities do not elect me—
I elect myself.
I swam in the sea, and lo!
The continents assembled like islands off my coast.
My talk is with Homer and Bonaparte, with David and Garibaldi,
with China and Pharaoh and Texas;
When I laugh it is with Lucifer and Rabelais.
A pathfinder is my mistress, one hard to keep and unbridled—
I have no respect for tame women.
My friends and I do not meet every day,
For we are centuries apart, our salutations girdle the globe.

I have eaten locusts with Jeremiah;
I invite all hatreds and the stings of little creatures—
They enrich me, I glory in my parasites.

No man shall ever read me,
For I bring about in a gesture what they cannot fathom in a life;
Yet I tell Bob and Harry and Bill—
It costs me nothing to be kind;
If I am a generous adversary, be not deceived, neither be devoted—
It is because I despise you.
Yet if any man claim to be my peer I shall meet him,
For that man has an insolence that I like;
I am beholden to him.
I know the lightning when I see it,
And the toad when I see it. . .
I warn all pretenders.
Yet before I came it was known of me to the chosen, all that I
 should do.
Every tree knew it;
Every lion and every leech knew it—
And called out to meet the new enemy,
The new friend. . .
What power can deny me?
It was known that I should do not one thing but hundreds,
For I despise my works and make them obey me.
I have my time and I bide it. . .
It was known that I should turn no whit from my end, until I
 had attained it.

Nothing has scathed me,
Nothing ever, nor ever will.
I have touched pitch, I have revelled in it and rolled in it;
Buried in mire and filth, I laughed long,
And sprang up.
I have loved lust and vain deviltries.
And taken them into my heart—

Their dirt and their lies—and my heart was aflame
With a new fancy. . .
Not me can pitch defile!
For the Spring, my sister, rose under my feet
And I was again naked and white,
Ready to dive into the deep pool, green and bottomless,
The medium for heroes, since it is dangerous and beautiful—
The pool of Tomorrow!
It is because I breathe like fishes and live in the waters of To-
morrow that Death fears me. . .

How often I have intercepted thee, O Death!
O windy liar!
Thou canst do nothing against me;
If I command thee to stand back thou art afraid and cowerest,
For I have caught thee often and punished thee. . .

I am the greatest laugh of all,
Greater than the sun and the oak-tree,
Than the frog and Apollo;
I laugh all day long!
I laugh at Death, I hail Death, I kiss her on the cheek as a lover
his bride,
But the lover goes not to his bride unless he desire her;
I go not to Death until I am ready.
The strong lover goes not to his bride save when he would people
his land with sons;
Then I, too, I go not to Death, save it be for the labor greater than
all others.
I shall break her with my laughter;
I shall complete her. . .
Only then shall Death be when I die!

Joyce Kilmer

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

EASTER

The air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the sky
And sings.

Alfred Kreymborg

AMERICA

Up and down he goes
With terrible, reckless strides,
Flaunting great lamps
With joyous swings—
One to the East
And one to the West—
And flaunting two words
In a thunderous call
That thrills the hearts of all enemies:
All, One; All, One; All, One; All, One!
Beware that queer, wild, wonderful boy
And his playground—don't go near!
All, One; All, One; All, One; All, One;
Up and down he goes.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
Is that beautiful old parchment
In which the sun
And the moon
Keep their diary.
To read it all,
One must be a linguist
More learned than Father Wisdom;
And a visionary
More clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
One must be an apostle:
One who is more than intimate

In having been, always,
The only confidant—
Like the earth
Or the sea.

CÉZANNE

Our door was shut to the noon-day heat.
We could not see him.
We might not have heard him either—
Resting, dozing, dreaming pleasantly.
But his step was tremendous—
Are mountains on the march?

He was no man who passed;
But a great faithful horse
Dragging a load
Up the hill.

PARASITE

Good woman:
Don't love the man.
Love yourself,
As you have done so exquisitely before.
Like that tortoise-shell cat of yours
Washing away the flies; or are they fleas?
You've hurt him again?
Good!
Do it often.
No—
He'll love you the more—
Always.
Remember how he forgave you the last time,
And how he loved you in the forgiving.

Give him an adventure in godhood
 And the higher moralities.
 Hurt him again.
 Fine!

William Laird

TRAÜMEREI AT OSTENDORFF'S

I ate at Ostendorff's, and saw a dame
 With eager golden eyes, paired with a red,
 Bald, chilled, old man. Piercing the clatter came
 Keen *Traumerei*. On the sound he bowed his head,
 Covered his eyes, and looked on things long sped.
 Her white fierce fingers strained, but could not stir
 His close-locked hands, nor bring him back to her.

Let him alone, bright lady; for he clips
 A fairer lass than you, with all your fire:
 Let him alone; he touches sweeter lips
 Than yours he hired, as others yet shall hire:
 Leave him the quickening pang of clean desire,
 Even though vain: nor taint those spring winds blown
 From banks of perished bloom: let him alone.

Bitter-sweet melody, that call'st to tryst
 Love from the hostile dark, would God thy breath
 Might break upon him now through thickening mist,
 The trumpet-summons of imperial Death;
 That now, with fire-clean lips where quivereth
 Atoning sorrow, he shall seek the eyes
 Long turned towards earth from fields of paradise

In vain: by virtue of a far-off smile,
Men may be deaf a space to gross behests
Of nearer voices; for some little while
Sharp pains of youth may burn in old men's breasts.
But—men must eat, though angels be their guests:
The waiter brought spaghetti; he looked up,
Hemmed, blinked, and fiddled with his coffee-cup.

A VERY OLD SONG

"Daughter, thou art come to die:
Sound be thy sleeping, lass."
"Well: without lament or cry,
Mother, let me pass."

"What things on mould were best of all?
(Soft be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"The apples reddening till they fall
In the sun beside the convent wall.
Let me pass."

"Whom on earth hast thou loved best?
(Sound be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"Him that shared with me thy breast;
Thee; and a knight last year our guest.
He hath an heron to his crest.
Let me pass."

"What leavest thou of fame or hoard?
(Soft be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"My far-blown shame for thy reward;
To my brother, gold to get him a sword.
Let me pass."

"But what wilt leave thy lover, Grim?
(Sound be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"The hair he kissed to strangle him.
Mother, let me pass."

D. H. Lawrence

A WOMAN AND HER DEAD HUSBAND

Ah stern cold man,
How can you lie so relentless hard
While I wash you with weeping water!
Ah face, carved hard and cold,
You have been like this, on your guard
Against me, since death began.

You masquerader!
How can you shame to act this part
Of unswerving indifference to me?
It is not you; why disguise yourself
Against me, to break my heart,
You evader?

You've a warm mouth,
A good warm mouth always sooner to soften
Even than your sudden eyes.
Ah cruel, to keep your mouth
Relentless, however often
I kiss it in drouth.

You are not he.
Who are you, lying in his place on the bed
And rigid and indifferent to me?
His mouth, though he laughed or sulked,
Was always warm and red
And good to me.

And his eyes could see
The white moon hang like a breast revealed
By the slipping shawl of stars,

Could see the small stars tremble
As the heart beneath did wield
Systole, diastole.

And he showed it me
So, when he made his love to me;
And his brows like rocks on the sea jut out,
And his eyes were deep like the sea
With shadow, and he looked at me,
Till I sank in him like the sea,
Awfully.

Oh, he was multiform—
Which then was he among the manifold?
The gay, the sorrowful, the seer?
I have loved a rich race of men in one—
But not this, this never-warm
Metal-cold—!

Ah masquerader!
With your steel face white-enamelled,
Were you he, after all, and I never
Saw you or felt you in kissing?
—Yet sometimes my heart was trammelled
With fear, evader!

Then was it you
After all, this cold, hard man?
—Ah no, look up at me,
Tell me it isn't true,
That you're only frightening me!

You will not stir,
Nor hear me, not a sound.
—Then it was you—
And all this time you were
Like this when I lived with you,

It is not true,
I am frightened, I am frightened of you
And of everything.
O God!—God too
Has deceived me in everything,
In everything.

FIREFLIES IN THE CORN

A woman taunts her lover:

Look at the little darlings in the corn!
The rye is taller than you, who think yourself
So high and mighty: look how its heads are borne
Dark and proud on the sky, like a number of knights
Passing with spears and pennants and manly scorn.

And always likely!—Oh, if I could ride
With my head held high-serene against the sky
Do you think I'd have a creature like you at my side
With your gloom and your doubt that you love me?
O darling rye,
How I adore you for your simple pride!

And those bright fireflies wafting in between
And over the swaying cornstalks, just above
All their dark-feathered helmets, like little green
Stars come low and wandering here for love
Of this dark earth, and wandering all serene—!

How I adore you, you happy things, you dears,
Riding the air and carrying all the time
Your little lanterns behind you: it cheers
My heart to see you settling and trying to climb
The corn-stalks, tipping with fire their spears.

All over the corn's dim motion, against the blue
Dark sky of night, the wandering glitter, the swarm
Of questing brilliant things:—you joy, you true
Spirit of careless joy: ah, how I warm
My poor and perished soul at the joy of you!

The man answers and she mocks:

You're a fool, woman. I love you, and you know I do!
—Lord, take his love away, it makes him whine.
And I give you everything that you want me to.
—Lord, dear Lord, do you think he ever *can* shine?

GREEN

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

GRIEF

The darkness steals the forms of all the queens.
But oh, the palms of her two black hands are red!
It is Death I fear so much, it is not the dead—
Not this gray book, but the red and bloody scenes.

The lamps are white like snowdrops in the grass;
The town is like a churchyard, all so still
And gray, now night is here: nor will
Another torn red sunset come to pass.

And so I sit and turn the book of gray,
Feeling the shadows like a blind man reading,
All fearful lest I find some next word bleeding.
Nay, take my painted missal book away.

SERVICE OF ALL THE DEAD

Between the avenue of cypresses
All in their scarlet capes and surplices
Of linen, go the chaunting choristers,
The priests in gold and black, the villagers.

And all along the path to the cemetery
The round dark heads of men crowd silently;
And black-scarfed faces of women-folk wistfully
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands
With sunken head and forgotten, folded hands;
And at the foot of a grave a mother kneels
With pale shut face, nor neither hears nor feels

The coming of the chaunting choristers
Between the avenue of cypresses,
The silence of the many villagers,
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

Agnes Lee

MOTHERHOOD

Mary, the Christ long slain, passed silently,
Following the children joyously astir
Under the cedrus and the olive-tree,
Pausing to let their laughter float to her.
Each voice an echo of a voice more dear,
She saw a little Christ in every face;
When lo, another woman, gliding near,
Yearned o'er the tender life that filled the place.

And Mary sought the woman's hand, and spoke:
"I know thee not, yet know thy memory tossed
With all a thousand dreams their eyes evoke
Who bring to thee a child beloved and lost.

"I, too, have rocked my little one.
Oh, He was fair!
Yea, fairer than the fairest sun,
And like its rays through amber spun
His sun-bright hair.
Still I can see it shine and shine."
"Even so," the woman said, "was mine."

"His ways were ever darling ways"—
And Mary smiled—
"So soft, so clinging! Glad relays
Of love were all His precious days.
My little child!
My infinite star! My music fled!"
"Even so was mine," the woman said.

Then whispered Mary: "Tell me, thou,
Of thine." And she:
"Oh, mine was rosy as a bough
Blooming with roses, sent, somehow,
To bloom for me!
His balmy fingers left a thrill
Within my breast that warms me still."

Then gazed she down some wilder, darker hour,
And said—when Mary questioned, knowing not:
"Who art thou, mother of so sweet a flower?"—
"I am the mother of Iscariot."

A STATUE IN A GARDEN

I was a goddess ere the marble found me.
 Wind, wind, delay not!
 Waft my spirit where the laurel crowned me!
 Will the wind stay not?

Then tarry, tarry, listen, little swallow!
 An old glory feeds me—
 I lay upon the bosom of Apollo!
 Not a bird heeds me.

For here the days are alien. Oh, to waken
 Mine, mine, with calling!
 But on my shoulders bare, like hopes forsaken,
 The dead leaves are falling.

The sky is gray and full of unshed weeping
 As dim down the garden
 I wait and watch the early autumn sweeping.
 The stalks fade and harden.

The souls of all the flowers afar have rallied.
 The trees, gaunt, appalling,
 Attest the gloom, and on my shoulders pallid
 The dead leaves are falling.

ON THE JAIL STEPS

I've won the race.
 Young man, I'm new!
Old Sallow-face
Good luck to you!

I've turned about,
 And paid for sin.
*And you come out,
 As I go in.*

Ten years! but mark,
 I am free, free!
*Ten years of dark
 Shall gather me.*

My wife—long-while
 She wept her pain.
*She cannot smile;
 She weeps again.*

My little one
 Shall know my call.
*Child is there none
 For sin grows tall.*

Now who are you,
 Spar of hell's flood?
*And who, and who,
 But your own blood?*

HER GOING

The Wife

Child, why do you linger beside her portal?
 None shall hear you now if you knock or clamor.
 All is dark, hidden in heaviest leafage.
 None shall behold you.

Truth

Gone, gone, the dear, the beautiful lady!
 I, her comrade, tarry but to lament her.

Ah, the day of her vanishing all things lovely
Shared in her fleetness!
Tell me her going.

The Wife

You are a child. How tell you?

Truth

I am a child, yet old as the earliest sorrow.
Talk to me as you would to an old, old woman.
I own the ages.

The Wife

Voices, they say, gossipped around her dwelling.
She awoke, departing, they say, in silence.
I am glad she is gone. The old hurt fastens.
Hate is upon me.

It was hard to live down the day, and wonder,
Wonder why the tears were forever welling,
Wonder if on his lips her kiss I tasted
Turning to claim him.

Truth

Jealousy, mad, brooding blind and unfettered,
Takes its terrible leap over lie and malice.
Who shall question her now in the land of shadow?
Who shall uphold her?

The Wife

It was hard to know that peace had forsaken
All my house, to greet with a dull endeavor
Babe or book, so to forget a moment
I was forgotten.

Truth

Who shall question her now in the land of shadow,
Question the mute pale lips, and the marble fingers,
Eyelids fallen on eyes grown dim as the autumn?
Ah, the beloved!

The Wife

Go, go, bringer of ache and discord!

Truth

Go I may not. Some, they think to inter me.
Out of the mold and clay my visible raiment
Rises forever.

The Wife

Hers the sin that lured the light from our threshold,
Hers the sin that I lost his love and grew bitter.

Truth

Lost his love? You never possessed it, woman.

The Wife

Sharp tongue, have pity! . . .

Yes, I knew. But I loved him, hoping for all.
I said in my heart: "Time shall bring buds to blossom."
I almost saw the flower of the flame descending.
Then—she came toying.

He is mine, mine, by the laws of the ages!
Mine, mine, mine—yes, body and spirit!
I am glad she has gone her way to the shadow.
Hate is upon me.

Oh, the bar over which my soul would see
All that eludes my soul, while he remembers!
You, dispel if you can my avenging passion—
Clouds are before me!

William Ellery Leonard

INDIAN SUMMER

After completing a book for one now dead.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)*

In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
Lone as a lad whose dog's no longer near,
Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned,
Lone on the loved hill. . . . And below me here
The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
Along red clusters of the sumach streams;
The shrivelled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
(. . . forever . . . forever . . . forever . . .)
This is the lonely season of the year,
This is the season of our lonely dreams.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun
She is not by, to know my task is done!)*

The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
Show like an Indian village of dead days;
The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
And floats atop the distant woods ablaze
With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
Await yon full-moon of the night-to-be.
(. . . far . . . and far . . . and far . . .)
These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)*
And this the hill she visited, as friend;

And this the hill she lingered on, as bride—
 Down in the yellow valley is the end:
 They laid her . . . in no evening autumn tide . . .
 Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
 The queens and cave-women of ancient earth.

This is the hill . . . and over my city's towers
 Across the world from sunset, yonder in air,
 Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
 Of piled masonry, which shall be ours
 To give, completed, to our children there . . .
 And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
 Shall house new laughter . . . Yet I tried . . . I tried . . .
 And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
 I built her many a fire for love . . . for mirth . . .
 (When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
 Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . .
 (. . . farewell . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .)
 We dare not think too long on those who died,
 While still so many yet must come to birth.

Vachel Lindsay

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

To be sung to the tune of THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB with indicated instruments.

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum.

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

The saints smiled gravely, and they said, "He's come."

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Bass drums

Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
 Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
 Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale—
 Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail!

Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath
 Unwashed legions with the ways of death—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
 The round world over—Booth had groaned for more.
 Every banner that the wide world flies
 Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
 Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang!
 Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
 Hallelujah! It was queer to see
 Bull-necked convicts with that land make free!
 Loons with bazoos blowing blare, blare, blare—
 On, on, upward through the golden air.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Banjos

Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod,
 Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
 Booth led boldly and he looked the chief:
 Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
 Beard a-flying, air of high command
 Unabated in that holy land.

*Bass drums
 slower and
 softer*

Jesus came from out the Court-House door,
 Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
 Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
 Round and round the mighty Court-House square.
 Yet in an instant all that blear review
 Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
 The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
 And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.

Flutes

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
 Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl;
 Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
 Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

*Bass drums
 louder and
 faster*

The hosts were sandalled and their wings were fire—

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir.

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Oh, shout Salvation! it was good to see

Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.

The banjos rattled and the tambourines

Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of queens!

*Grand
chorus
tambourines
—all instru-
ments in full
blast*

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer

He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.

Christ came gently with a robe and crown

For Booth the soldier while the throng knelt down.

He saw King Jesus—they were face to face,

And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

*Reverently
sung—no
instruments*

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN

John P. Altgeld: Dec. 30, 1847–March 12, 1902.

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.

Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

“We have buried him now,” thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.

They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.

They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you day after day;

Now you were ended. They praised you . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,

The widow bereft of her crust, and the boy without youth,

The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor,

That should have remembered forever . . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call—
 The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
 They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones;
 A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons.
 The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
 The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
 Time has its way with you there and the clay has its own.
 Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
 To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name;
 To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

THE CONGO

A Study of the Negro Race

I—THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
 Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
 Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
 Pounded on the table,
 Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
 Hard as they were able,
 Boom, boom, BOOM,
 With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
 THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
 I could not turn from their revel in derision.
 THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
 CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
 Then along that riverbank
 A thousand miles
 Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
 Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
 And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.

*A deep roll-
ing bass*

*More delib-
erate.
Solemnly
chanted*

And "BLOOD!" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors, *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket*
 "BLOOD!" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors; *racket*
 "Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
 Harry the uplands,
 Steal all the cattle,
 Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
 Bing!
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom!"
 A roaring, epic, rag-time tune *With a philosophic pause*
 From the mouth of the Congo
 To the Mountains of the Moon.
 Death is an Elephant,
 Torch-eyed and horrible, *Shrilly and with a heavily accented metre*
 Foam-flanked and terrible.
 Boom, steal the pygmies,
 Boom, kill the Arabs,
 Boom, kill the white men,
 Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.
 Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
 Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host. *Like the wind in the chimney*
 Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
 Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
 Listen to the creepy proclamation,
 Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
 Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
 Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
 "Be careful what you do,
 Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
 And all of the other
 Gods of the Congo,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."
All the O sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered

II—THEIR IRREPRESSIBLE HIGH SPIRITS

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
 Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
 And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
 And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
 With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

*Rather shrill
 and high*

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *Read exactly
 as in first
 section*
 CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

A negro fairyland swung into view,
 A minstrel river

*Lay emphasis
 on the delicate
 ideas.
 Keep as
 light-footed
 as possible*

Where dreams come true.

The ebony palace soared on high

Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.

The inlaid porches and casements shone

With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.

And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore

At the baboon butler in the agate door,

And the well-known tunes of the parrot band

That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came

*With pom-
 posity*

Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,

Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust

And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.

And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call

And danced the juba from wall to wall.

But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng

With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:

"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .

*With a great
 deliberation
 and ghostli-
 ness*

Just then from the doorway, as fat as shot

Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,

Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,

And tall silk hats that were red as wine.

*With over-
 whelming as-
 surance, good
 cheer, and
 pomp*

And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,

Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,

*With growing
 speed and*

Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
 And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
 And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
 Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
 (Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
 That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

*sharply
 marked
 dance-
 rhythm*

The cake-walk royalty then began
 To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
 To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
 While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
 And sang with the scalawags prancing there:
 "Walk with care, walk with care,
 Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
 And all of the other
 Gods of the Congo,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
 Beware, beware, walk with care,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
 BOOM."

*With a touch
 of negro dia-
 lect, and as
 rapidly as
 possible to-
 ward the end*

Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
 That made those glowering witch-men smile.

*Slow philo-
 sophic calm*

III—THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION

A good old negro in the slums of the town
 Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
 Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
 His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
 Beat on the Bible till he wore it out
 Starting the jubilee revival shout.
 And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,

*Heavy bass.
 With a literal
 imitation of
 camp-meet-
 ing racket,
 and trance*

And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
 And they all repented, a thousand strong,
 From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong,
 And slammed with their hymn-books till they shook the
 room

With "Glory, glory, glory,"
 And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
 CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
 And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
 In bright white steel they were seated round,
 And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
 And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high,
 Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:
 "Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
 Never again will he hoo-doo you,
 Never again will he hoo-doo you."

*Exactly as in
 the first sec-
 tion. Begin
 with terror
 and power,
 end with joy*

*Sung to the
 tune of
 "Hark, ten
 thousand
 harps and
 voices"*

Then along that river, a thousand miles
 The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
 Pioneer angels cleared the way
 For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
 For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
 Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
 There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed,
 A million boats of the angels sailed
 With oars of silver, and prows of blue
 And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
 'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
 Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation,
 And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
 "Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
 Never again will he hoo-doo you.
 Never again will he hoo-doo you."

*With growing
 deliberation
 and joy*

*In a rather
 high key—as
 delicately as
 possible*

*To the tune of
 "Hark, ten
 thousand
 harps and
 voices"*

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
 And only the vulture dared again
 By the far, lone mountains of the moon
 To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:
 "Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
 Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

*Dying down
 into a pene-
 trating,
 terrified
 whisper*

ALADDIN AND THE JINN

"Bring me soft song," said Aladdin;
 "This tailor-shop sings not at all.
 Chant me a word of the twilight,
 Of roses that mourn in the fall.
 Bring me a song like hashish
 That will comfort the stale and the sad,
 For I would be mending my spirit,
 Forgetting these days that are bad:
 Forgetting companions too shallow,
 Their quarrels and arguments thin;
 Forgetting the shouting muezzin."
 "I am your slave," said the Jinn.

"Bring me old wines," said Aladdin,
 "I have been a starved pauper too long.
 Serve them in vessels of jade and of shell,
 Serve them with fruit and with song:
 Wines of pre-Adamite Sultans
 Digged from beneath the black seas,
 New-gathered dew from the heavens
 Dripped down from heaven's sweet trees,
 Cups from the angels' pale tables
 That will make me both handsome and wise;
 For I have beheld her, the Princess—
 Firelight and starlight her eyes!
 Pauper I am—I would woo her.

And . . . let me drink wine to begin,
Though the Koran expressly forbids it."
"I am your slave," said the Jinn.

"Plan me a dome," said Aladdin,
"That is drawn like the dawn of the moon,
When the sphere seems to rest on the mountains
Half-hidden, yet full-risen soon.
Build me a dome," said Aladdin,
"That shall cause all young lovers to sigh—
The fulness of life and of beauty,
Peace beyond peace to the eye;
A palace of foam and of opal,
Pure moonlight without and within,
Where I may enthrone my sweet lady."
"I am your slave," said the Jinn.

THE CHINESE NIGHTINGALE

A Song in Chinese Tapestries

Dedicated to S. T. F.

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead—
Ended license, lust and play:
Why do you iron the night away?
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round.
While the monster shadows glower and creep,
What can be better for man than sleep?"

"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;
"My breast with vision is satisfied,
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."
Then he lit five fire-crackers in a pan.

"Pop, pop!" said the fire-crackers, "cra-cra-crack!"
He lit a joss-stick long and black.
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,
And this was the song of the gray small bird:

"Where is the princess, loved forever,
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,
And there on the snowy table wide
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face . . .
Yet she put away all form and pride,
And laid her glimmering veil aside
With a childlike smile for Chang and for me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,
Ironed and ironed, all alone.
And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:
"Have you forgotten . . .
Deep in the ages, long, long ago,
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?
We sold our grain in the peacock town
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown—
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown . . .

"When all the world was drinking blood
From the skulls of men and bulls,
And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,

We drank our tea in China beneath the sacred spice-trees,
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his carolling.
Do you remember, ages after,
At last the world we were born to own?
You were the heir of the yellow throne—
The world was the field of the Chinese man
And we were the pride of the sons of Han.
We copied deep books, and we carved in jade,
And wove white silks in the mulberry shade." . . .

"I remember, I remember
That Spring came on forever,
That Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,
Though dawn was bringing the western day,
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing away . . .
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,
The railroad-yard, and the clock-tower bright,
Demon-clouds crossed ancient valleys;
Across wide lotus-ponds of light
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,
Opened her fan, closed her fan,
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:
"Do you remember,
Ages after,
Our palace of heart-red stone?
Do you remember
The little doll-faced children

With their lanterns full of moon-fire,
 That came from all the empire
 Honoring the throne?—
 The loveliest fête and carnival
 Our world had ever known?
 The sages sat about us
 With their heads bowed in their beards,
 With proper meditation on the sight.
 Confucius was not born;
 We lived in those great days
 Confucius later said were lived aright . . .
 And this gray bird, on that day of spring,
 With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
 Captured the world with his carolling.
 Late at night his tune was spent.
 Peasants,
 Sages,
 Children,
 Homeward went,
 And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.
 We walked alone, our hearts were high and free.
 I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,
 I had a silvery name—do you remember
 The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim—
 He bent to his work, ironing away;
 But she was arch and knowing and glowing.
 And the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . . darling . . ."
 Said the Chinese nightingale.

The great gray joss on a rustic shelf,
 Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,
 Sang impolitely, as though by himself,

Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:

"Back through a hundred, hundred years

Hear the waves as they climb the piers,

Hear the howl of the silver seas,

Hear the thunder!

Hear the gongs of holy China

How the waves and tunes combine

In a rhythmic clashing wonder,

Incantation old and fine:

 'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons;

 Red fire-crackers, and green fire-crackers,

 And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.'"

Then the lady, rosy-red,

Turned to her lover Chang and said:

"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn

When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,

And worked a spell this great joss taught

Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?

From the flag high over our palace-home

He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—

A king of beauty and tempest and thunder

Panting to tear our sorrows asunder,

A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.

We mounted the back of that royal slave

With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.

We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,

We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.

To our secret ivory house we were borne.

We looked down the wonderful wing-filled regions

Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.

Right by my breast the nightingale sang;

The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist

That we this hour regain—

Song-fire for the brain.

When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,

When you cried for your heart's new pain,
What was my name in the dragon-mist,
In the rings of rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—
Ere you returned to the shining harbor
There were pirates by ten thousand
Descended on the town
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;
I stood upon the sand;
With lifted hand I looked upon them
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.
Deep, deep below the bay, the sea-weed and the spray,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies."

Then this did the noble lady say:
"Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day
When you flew like a courier on before
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,
And we drove the steed in your singing path—
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath;
And found our city all aglow,
And knighted this joss that decked it so?
There were golden fishes in the purple river

And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.
There were golden junks in the laughing river,
And silver junks and rainbow junks:
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies,
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town
By the black-lacquer gate
Where walked in state
The kind king Chang
And his sweet-heart mate . . .
With his flag-born dragon
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade;
And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,
And priests who bowed them down to your song—
By the city called Han, the peacock town,
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,
The nightingale town.”

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,
A vague, unravelling, answering tune,
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;
Sang as though for the soul of him
Who ironed away in that bower dim:

“I have forgotten
Your dragons great,
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.
I vaguely know
There were heroes of old,
Troubles more than the heart could hold,
There were wolves in the woods
Yet lambs in the fold,
Nests in the top of the almond tree . . .

The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree . . .
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,
Years on years I but half-remember . . .
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,
May and June, then dead December,
Dead December, then again June.
Who shall end my dream's confusion?
Life is a loom, weaving illusion . . .
I remember, I remember
There were ghostly veils and laces . . .
In the shadowy, bowery places . . .
With lovers' ardent faces
Bending to one another,
Speaking each his part.
They infinitely echo
In the red cave of my heart.
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart!'
They said to one another.
They spoke, I think, of perils past.
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.
One thing I remember:
Spring came on forever,
Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

Amy Lowell

PATTERNS

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.

With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.

What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on
his shoes.

I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped
me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this*brocade,
For the sun shifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."

And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.

For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

1777

I—THE TRUMPET-VINE ARBOR

The throats of the little red trumpet-flowers are wide open,
And the clangor of brass beats against the hot sunlight.
They bray and blare at the burning sky.
Red! Red! Coarse notes of red,
Trumpeted at the blue sky.
In long streaks of sound, molten metal,
The vine declares itself.
Clang!—from its red and yellow trumpets.
Clang!—from its long, nasal trumpets,
Splitting the sunlight into ribbons, tattered and shot with noise.

I sit in the cool arbor, in a green and gold twilight.
It is very still, for I cannot hear the trumpets;
I only know that they are red and open,
And that the sun above the arbor shakes with heat.
My quill is newly mended,
And makes fine-drawn lines with its point.
Down the long white paper it makes little lines,
Just lines,—up—down—criss-cross.
My heart is strained out at the pin-point of my quill;
It is thin and writhing like the marks of the pen.
My hand marches to a squeaky tune,
It marches down the paper to a squealing of fifes.
My pen and the trumpet-flowers,
And Washington's armies away over the smoke-tree to the south-
west.
"Yankee Doodle," my darling! It is you against the British,
Marching in your ragged shoes to batter down King George.

What have you got in your hat? Not a feather, I wager.
Just a hay-straw, for it is the harvest you are fighting for.
Hay in your hat, and the whites of their eyes for a target!
Like Bunker Hill, two years ago, when I watched all day from the
housetop,
Through father's spy-glass,
The red city, and the blue, bright water,
And puffs of smoke which you made.
Twenty miles away,
Round by Cambridge, or over the Neck,
But the smoke was white—white!
To-day the trumpet-flowers are red—red—
And I cannot see you fighting;
But old Mr. Dimond has fled to Canada,
And Myra sings "Yankee Doodle" at her milking.

The red throats of the trumpets bray and clang in the sunshine,
And the smoke-tree puffs dun blossoms into the blue air.

II—THE CITY OF FALLING LEAVES

Leaves fall,
Brown leaves,
Yellow leaves streaked with brown.
They fall,
Flutter,
Fall again.
The brown leaves,
And the streaked yellow leaves,
Loosen on their branches
And drift slowly downwards.
One,
One, two, three,
One, two, five.
All Venice is a falling of autumn leaves,
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.

"That sonnet, Abate,
 Beautiful,
 I am quite exhausted by it.
 Your phrases turn about my heart,
 And stifle me to swooning.
 Open the window, I beg.
 Lord! What a strumming of fiddles and mandolins!
 'Tis really a shame to stop indoors.
 Call my maid, or I will make you lace me yourself.
 Fie, how hot it is, not a breath of air!
 See how straight the leaves are falling.
 Marianna, I will have the yellow satin caught up with silver fringe,
 It peeps out delightfully from under a mantle.
 Am I well painted to-day, *caro Abate mio?*
 You will be proud of me at the Ridotto, hey?
 Proud of being *cavalier servente* to such a lady?"
 "Can you doubt it, *bellissima Contessa?*
 A pinch more rouge on the right cheek,
 And Venus herself shines less . . ."
 "You bore me, Abate;
 I vow I must change you!
 A letter, Achmet?
 Run and look out of the window, Abate.
 I will read my letter in peace."

The little black slave with the yellow satin turban
 Gazes at his mistress with strained eyes.
 His yellow turban and black skin
 Are gorgeous—barbaric.
 The yellow satin dress with its silver flashings
 Lies on a chair,
 Beside a black mantle and a black mask.
 Yellow and black,
 Gorgeous—barbaric.
 The lady reads her letter,

And the leaves drift slowly
Past the long windows.
"How silly you look, my dear Abate,
With that great brown leaf in your wig.
Pluck it off, I beg you,
Or I shall die of laughing."

A yellow wall,
Aflare in the sunlight,
Chequered with shadows,
Shadows of vine-leaves,
Shadows of masks.
Masks coming, printing themselves for an instant,
Then passing on,
More masks always replacing them.
Masks with tricornes and rapiers sticking out behind,
Pursuing masks with veils and high heels,
The sunlight shining under their insteps.
One,
One, two,
One, two, three—
There is a thronging of shadows on the hot wall,
Filigreed at the top with moving leaves.
Yellow sunlight and black shadows,
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
Two masks stand together,
And the shadow of a leaf falls through them,
Marking the wall where they are not.
From hat-tip to shoulder-tip,
From elbow to sword-hilt,
The leaf falls.
The shadows mingle,
Blur together,
Slide along the wall and disappear.

Gold of mosaics and candles,
And night-blackness lurking in the ceiling beams.
Saint Mark's glitters with flames and reflections.
A cloak brushes aside,
And the yellow of satin
Licks out over the colored inlays of the pavement.
Under the gold crucifixes
There is a meeting of hands
Reaching from black mantles.
Sighing embraces, bold investigations,
Hide in confessionals,
Sheltered by the shuffling of feet.
Gorgeous—barbaric
In its mail of jewels and gold,
Saint Mark's looks down at the swarm of black masks;
And outside in the palace gardens brown leaves fall,
Flutter,
Fall.
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.

Blue-black the sky over Venice,
With a pricking of yellow stars.
There is no moon,
And the waves push darkly against the prow
Of the gondola,
Coming from Malamocco
And streaming toward Venice.
It is black under the gondola hood,
But the yellow of a satin dress
Glares out like the eye of a watching tiger.
Yellow compassed about with darkness,
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
The boatman sings,
It is Tasso that he sings;

The lovers seek each other beneath their mantles,
And the gondola drifts over the lagoon, aslant to the coming dawn.
But at Malamocco in front,
In Venice behind,
Fall the leaves,
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.
They fall,
Flutter,
Fall.

VENUS TRANSIENS

Tell me,
Was Venus more beautiful
Than you are,
When she stopped
The crinkled waves,
Drifting shoreward
On her plaited shell?
Was Botticelli's vision
Fairer than mine;
And were the painted rosebuds
He tossed his lady
Of better worth
Than the words I blow about you
To cover your too great loveliness
As with a gauze
Of misted silver?

For me,
You stand poised
In the blue and buoyant air,
Cinctured by bright winds,
Treading the sunlight.
And the waves which precede you
Ripple and stir
The sands at my feet.

A LADY

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth century boudoir.
In your eyes
Smoulder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul
Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust,
That its sparkle may amuse you.

CHINOISERIES

REFLECTIONS

When I looked into your eyes,
I saw a garden
With peonies, and tinkling pagodas,
And round-arched bridges
Over still lakes.
A woman sat beside the water
In a rain-blue, silken garment.
She reached through the water
To pluck the crimson peonies
Beneath the surface,

But as she grasped the stems,
They jarred and broke into white-green ripples,
And as she drew out her hand,
The water-drops dripping from it
Stained her rain-blue dress like tears.

FALLING SNOW

The snow whispers about me,
And my wooden clogs
Leave holes behind me in the snow.
But no one will pass this way
Seeking my footsteps,
And when the temple bell rings again
They will be covered and gone.

HOAR-FROST

In the cloud-gray mornings
I heard the herons flying;
And when I came into my garden,
My silken outer-garment
Trailed over withered leaves.
A dried leaf crumbles at a touch,
But I have seen many Autumns
With herons blowing like smoke
Across the sky.

SOLITAIRE

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,
My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in old, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples,
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.

It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all the good folk have put out their bed-room candles,
And the city is still!

A GIFT

See! I give myself to you, Beloved!
My words are little jars
For you to take and put upon a shelf.
Their shapes are quaint and beautiful,
And they have many pleasant colors and lustres
To recommend them.
Also the scent from them fills the room
With sweetness of flowers and crushed grasses.

When I shall have given you the last one
You will have the whole of me,
But I shall be dead.

RED SLIPPERS

Red slippers in a shop-window; and outside in the street, flaws
of gray, windy sleet!

Behind the polished glass the slippers hang in long threads of
red, festooning from the ceiling like stalactites of blood, flooding
the eyes of passers-by with dripping color, jamming their crimson
reflections against the windows of cabs and tram-cars, screaming
their claret and salmon into the teeth of the sleet, plopping their
little round maroon lights upon the tops of umbrellas.

The row of white, sparkling shop-fronts is gashed and bleeding,
it bleeds red slippers. They spout under the electric light, fluid
and fluctuating, a hot rain—and freeze again to red slippers,
myriadly multiplied in the mirror side of the window.

They balance upon arched insteps like springing bridges of crimson lacquer; they swing up over curved heels like whirling tanagers sucked in a wind-pocket; they flatten out, heelless, like July ponds, flared and burnished by red rockets.

Snap, snap, they are cracker sparks of scarlet in the white, monotonous block of shops.

They plunge the clangor of billions of vermilion trumpets into the crowd outside, and echo in faint rose over the pavement.

People hurry by, for these are only shoes, and in a window farther down is a big lotus bud of cardboard, whose petals open every few minutes and reveal a wax doll, with staring bead eyes and flaxen hair, lolling awkwardly in its flower chair.

One has often seen shoes, but whoever saw a cardboard lotus bud before?

The flaws of gray, windy sleet beat on the shop-window where there are only red slippers.

APOLOGY

Be not angry with me that I bear
Your colors everywhere,
All through each crowded street,
And meet
The wonder-light in every eye,
As I go by.

Each plodding wayfarer looks up to gaze,
Blinded by rainbow-haze,
The stuff of happiness,
No less,
Which wraps me in its glad-hued folds
Of peacock golds.

Before my feet the dusty, rough-paved way
Flashes beneath its gray.
My steps fall ringed with light,
So bright
It seems a myriad suns are strown
About the town.

Around me is the sound of steepled bells,
And rich perfumèd smells
Hang like a wind-forgotten cloud,
And shroud
Me from close contact with the world.
I dwell, impearled.

You blazon me with jewelled insignia.
A flaming nebula
Rims in my life. And yet
You set
The word upon me, unconfessed,
To go unguessed.

Percy Mackaye

OLD AGE

Old Age, the irrigator,
Digs our bosoms straighter,
More workable and deeper still
To turn the ever-running mill
Of nights and days. He makes a trough
To drain our passions off,
That used so beautiful to lie
Variegated to the sky,
On waste moorlands of the heart—

Haunts of idleness, and art
Still half-dreaming. All their piedness,
Rank and wild and shallow wideness,
Desultory splendors, he
Straightens conscientiously
To a practicable sluice
Meant for workaday, plain use.
All the mists of early dawn,
Twilit marshes, being gone
With their glamor, and their stench,
There is left—a narrow trench.

SONG FROM "MATER"

Long ago, in the young moonlight,
I lost my heart to a hero;
Strong and tender and stern and right,
Darker than night,
And terribler than Nero.
Heigh, but he was dear, O!

And there, to bind our fellowship,
I laughed at him; and a moment after,
I laughed again till he bit his lip,
For the test of love is laughter.

"Lord and master, look up!" I cried;
"I wreathe your brow with a laurel!
Gloom and wisdom and right and pride
Cast them aside,
And kiss, and cure our quarrel.
Never mind the moral!"

Alas! with strange and saddened eyes
He looked on me; and my mirth grew dafter,
To feel the flush of his dark surprise;
For the zest of love is laughter.

Long ago, in the old moonlight,
I lost my hero and lover;
Strong and tender and stern and right,
Never shall night
Nor day his brow uncover.
Ah, my heart, that is over!

Yet still, for joy of the fellowship
That bound us both through the years long after,
I laugh to think how he bit his lip;
For the test of love—
And the best of love—is laughter.

Frederic Manning

SACRIFICE

Love suffereth all things,
And we,
Out of the travail and pain of our striving,
Bring unto Thee the perfect prayer:
For the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

For us no splendid apparel of pageantry—
Burnished breast-plates, scarlet banners, and trumpets
Sounding exultantly.
But the mean things of the earth Thou hast chosen,
Decked them with suffering;
Made them beautiful with the passion for rightness,
Strong with the pride of love.

Yea, though our praise of Thee slayeth us,
Yet love shall exalt us beside Thee triumphant,
Dying that these live;

And the earth again be beautiful with orchards,
Yellow with wheatfields;
And the lips of others praise Thee, though our lips
Be stopped with earth, and songless.
Yet we shall have brought Thee their praises
Brought unto Thee the perfect prayer:
For the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

O God of sorrows,
Whose feet come softly through the dews,
Stoop Thou unto us,
For we die so Thou livest,
Our hearts the cups of Thy vintage:
And the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

AT EVEN

Hush ye! Hush ye! My babe is sleeping.
Hush, ye winds, that are full of sorrow!
Hush, ye rains, from your weary weeping!
Give him slumber until to-morrow.

Hush ye, yet! In the years hereafter,
Surely sorrow is all his reaping;
Tears shall be in the place of laughter,
Give him peace for a while in sleeping.

Hush ye, hush! he is weak and ailing:
Send his mother his share of weeping.
Hush ye, winds, from your endless wailing;
Hush ye, hush ye, my babe is sleeping!

John Masefield

SHIPS

I cannot tell their wonder nor make known
Magic that once thrilled through me to the bone;
But all men praise some beauty, tell some tale,
Vent a high mood which makes the rest seem pale,
Pour their heart's blood to flourish one green leaf,
Follow some Helen for her gift of grief,
And fail in what they mean, whate'er they do:
You should have seen, man cannot tell to you
The beauty of the ships of that my city.

That beauty now is spoiled by the sea's pity;
For one may haunt the pier a score of times,
Hearing St. Nicholas bells ring out the chimes,
Yet never see those proud ones swaying home
With mainyards backed and bows a cream of foam,
Those bows so lovely-curving, cut so fine,
Those coulter of the many-bubbled brine,
As once, long since, when all the docks were filled
With that sea-beauty man has ceased to build.

Yet, though their splendor may have ceased to be
Each played her sovereign part in making me;
Now I return my thanks with heart and lips
For the great queenliness of all those ships.

And first the first bright memory, still so clear,
An autumn evening in a golden year,
When in the last lit moments before dark
The *Chepica*, a steel-gray lovely barque,

Came to an anchor near us on the flood,
Her trucks aloft in sun-glow red as blood.

Then come so many ships that I could fill
Three docks with their fair hulls remembered still,
Each with her special memory's special grace,
Riding the sea, making the waves give place
To delicate high beauty; man's best strength,
Noble in every line in all their length.
Ailsa, *Genista*, ships, with long jibbooms,
The *Wanderer* with great beauty and strange dooms,
Liverpool (mightiest then) superb, sublime,
The *California* huge, as slow as time.
The *Copley* swift, the perfect *J. T. North*,
The loveliest barque my city has sent forth,
Dainty *John Lockett* well remembered yet,
The splendid *Argus* with her skysail set,
Stalwart *Drumcliff*, white-blocked, majestic *Sierras*,
Divine bright ships, the water's standard-bearers;
Melpomene, *Euphrosyne*, and their sweet
Sea-troubling sisters of the Fernie fleet;
Corunna (in whom my friend died) and the old
Long since loved *Esmeralda* long since sold.
Centurion passed in Rio, *Glaucus* spoken,
Aladdin burnt, the *Bidston* water-broken,
Yola, in whom my friend sailed, *Dawpool* trim,
Fierce-bowed *Egeria* plunging to the swim,
Stanmore wide-sterned, sweet *Cupica*, tall *Bard*,
Queen in all harbors with her moon-sail yard.

Though I tell many, there must still be others,
McVickar Marshall's ships and Fernie Brothers',
Lochs, *Counties*, *Shires*, *Drums*, the countless lines
Whose house-flags all were once familiar signs
At high main-trucks on Mersey's windy ways
When sunlight made the wind-white water blaze.

Their names bring back old mornings, when the docks
Shone with their house-flags and their painted blocks,
Their raking masts below the Custom House
And all the marvellous beauty of their bows.

Familiar steamers, too, majestic steamers,
Shearing Atlantic roller-tops to streamers,
Umbria, Etruria, noble, still at sea,
The grandest, then, that man had brought to be.
Majestic, City of Paris, City of Rome,
Forever jealous racers, out and home.

The *Alfred Holt's* blue smoke-stacks down the stream,
The fair *Loanda* with her bows a-cream.
Booth liners, Anchor liners, Red Star liners,
The marks and styles of countless ship-designers,
The *Magdalena, Puno, Potosi*,
Lost *Cotopaxi*, all well known to me.

These splendid ships, each with her grace, her glory,
Her memory of old song or comrade's story,
Still in my mind the image of life's need,
Beauty in hardest action, beauty indeed.
"They built great ships and sailed them," sounds most brave,
Whatever arts we have or fail to have.
I touch my country's mind, I come to grips
With half her purpose, thinking of these ships:
That art untouched by softness, all that line
Drawn ringing hard to stand the test of brine;
That nobleness and grandeur, all that beauty
Born of a manly life and bitter duty;
That splendor of fine bows which yet could stand
The shock of rollers never checked by land;
That art of masts, sail-crowded, fit to break,
Yet stayed to strength and backstayed into rake;
The life demanded by that art, the keen

Eye-puckered, hard-case seamen, silent, lean.
They are grander things than all the art of towns;
Their tests are tempests and the sea that drowns.
They are my country's line, her great art done
By strong brains laboring on the thought unwon.
They mark our passage as a race of men—
Earth will not see such ships as those again.

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

WATCHING BY A SICK-BED

I heard the wind all day,
And what it was trying to say.
I heard the wind all night
Rave as it ran to fight;

After the wind the rain,
And then the wind again
Running across the hill
As it runs still.

And all day long the sea
Would not let the land be,
But all night heaped her sand
On to the land;
I saw her glimmer white
All through the night,
Tossing the horrid hair
Still tossing there.

And all day long the stone
Felt how the wind was blown;
And all night long the rock
Stood the sea's shock;
While, from the window, I
Looked out, and wondered why,
Why at such length
Such force should fight such strength.

WHAT AM I, LIFE?

What am I, Life? A thing of watery salt
Held in cohesion by unresting cells,
Which work they know not why, which never halt,
Myself unwitting where their Master dwells.
I do not bid them, yet they toil, they spin
A world which uses me as I use them;
Nor do I know which end or which begin
Nor which to praise, which pamper, which condemn.
So, like a marvel in a marvel set,
I answer to the vast, as wave by wave

The sea of air goes over, dry or wet,
Or the full moon comes swimming from her cave,
Or the great sun comes forth: this myriad I
Tingles, not knowing how, yet wondering why.

Edgar Lee Masters

SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

THE HILL

*Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozier, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.*

*One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.*

*Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.*

*One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.*

*Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Seigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.*

*They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.*

*Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lol he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.*

OLLIE MCGEE

Have you seen walking through the village
A man with downcast eyes and haggard face?
That is my husband who, by secret cruelty
Never to be told, robbed me of my youth and my beauty;
Till at last, wrinkled and with yellow teeth,
And with broken pride and shameful humility,
I sank into the grave.
But what think you gnaws at my husband's heart?
The face of what I was, the face of what he made me!
These are driving him to the place where I lie.
In death, therefore, I am avenged.

DAISY FRASER

Did you ever hear of Editor Whedon
Giving to the public treasury any of the money he received
For supporting candidates for office?
Or for writing up the canning factory
To get people to invest?
Or for suppressing the facts about the bank,
When it was rotten and ready to break?
Did you ever hear of the Circuit Judge
Helping anyone except the "Q" railroad,
Or the bankers? Or did Rev. Peet or Rev. Sibley
Give any part of their salary, earned by keeping still,
Or speaking out as the leaders wished them to do,
To the building of the water works?
But I—Daisy Fraser, who always passed
Along the streets through rows of nods and smiles,
And coughs and words such as "there she goes,"
Never was taken before Justice Arnett
Without contributing ten dollars and costs
To the school fund of Spoon River!

HARE DRUMMER

Do the boys and girls still go to Siever's
For cider, after school, in late September?
Or gather hazel nuts among the thickets
On Aaron Hatfield's farm when the frosts begin?
For many times with the laughing girls and boys
Played I along the road and over the hills
When the sun was low and the air was cool,
Stopping to club the walnut tree
Standing leafless against a flaming west.
Now, the smell of the autumn smoke,
And the dropping acorns,
And the echoes about the vales

Bring dreams of life. They hover over me.
 They question me:
 Where are those laughing comrades?
 How many are with me, how many
 In the old orchards along the way to Siever's,
 And in the woods that overlook
 The quiet water?

DOC HILL

I went up and down the streets
 Here and there by day and night,
 Through all hours of the night caring for the poor who were sick.
 Do you know why?
 My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
 And I turned to the people and poured out my love to them.
 Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on the day of my
 funeral,
 And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
 But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
 To hold to the railing of the new life
 When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
 At the grave,
 Hiding herself, and her grief!

FIDDLER JONES

The earth keeps some vibration going
 There in your heart, and that is you.
 And if the people find you can fiddle,
 Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.
 What do you see, a harvest of clover?
 Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
 The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
 For beeves hereafter ready for market;
 Or else you hear the rustle of skirts

Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.
To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."
How could I till my forty acres
Not to speak of getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a wind-mill—only these?
And I never started to plow in my life
That some one did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres;
I ended up with a broken fiddle—
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.

THOMAS RHODES

Very well, you liberals,
And navigators into realms intellectual,
You sailors through heights imaginative,
Blown about by erratic currents, tumbling into air pockets,
You Margaret Fuller Slacks, Petits,
And Tennessee Claflin Shopes—
You found with all your boasted wisdom
How hard at the last it is
To keep the soul from splitting into cellular atoms.
While we, seekers of earth's treasures,
Getters and hoarders of gold,
Are self-contained, compact, harmonized,
Even to the end.

EDITOR WHEDON

To be able to see every side of every question;
 To be on every side, to be everything, to be nothing long;
 To pervert truth, to ride it for a purpose,
 To use great feelings and passions of the human family
 For base designs, for cunning ends,
 To wear a mask like the Greek actors—
 Your eight-page paper—behind which you huddle,
 Bawling through the megaphone of big type:
 "This is I, the giant."
 Thereby also living the life of a sneak-thief,
 Poisoned with the anonymous words
 Of your clandestine soul.
 To scratch dirt over scandal for money,
 And exhume it to the winds for revenge,
 Or to sell papers
 Crushing reputations, or bodies, if need be,
 To win at any cost, save your own life.
 To glory in demoniac power, ditching civilization,
 As a paranoiac boy puts a log on the track
 And derails the express train.
 To be an editor, as I was—
 Then to lie here close by the river over the place
 Where the sewage flows from the village,
 And the empty cans and garbage are dumped,
 And abortions are hidden.

SETH COMPTON

When I died, the circulating library
 Which I built up for Spoon River,
 And managed for the good of inquiring minds,
 Was sold at auction on the public square,
 As if to destroy the last vestige
 Of my memory and influence.
 For those of you who could not see the virtue

Of knowing Volney's *Ruins* as well as Butler's *Analogy*
And *Faust* as well as *Evangeline*,
Were really the power in the village,
And often you asked me,
"What is the use of knowing the evil in the world?"
I am out of your way now, Spoon River—
Choose your own good and call it good.
For I could never make you see
That no one knows what is good
Who knows not what is evil;
And no one knows what is true
Who knows not what is false.

HENRY C. CALHOUN

I reached the highest place in Spoon River,
But through what bitterness of spirit!
The face of my father, sitting speechless,
Child-like, watching his canaries,
And looking at the court-house window
Of the county judge's room,
And his admonitions to me to seek
My own in life, and punish Spoon River
To avenge the wrong the people did him,
Filled me with furious energy
To seek for wealth and seek for power.
But what did he do but send me along
The path that leads to the grove of the Furies?
I followed the path and I tell you this:
On the way to the grove you'll pass the Fates,
Shadow-eyed, bent over their weaving.
Stop for a moment, and if you see
The thread of revenge leap out of the shuttle
Then quickly snatch from Atropos
The shears and cut it, lest your sons,
And the children of them and their children
Wear the envenomed robe.

PERRY ZOLL

My thanks, friends of the County Scientific Association,
For this modest boulder,
And its little tablet of bronze.
Twice I tried to join your honored body,
And was rejected,
And when my little brochure
On the intelligence of plants
Began to attract attention
You almost voted me in.
After that I grew beyond the need of you
And your recognition.
Yet I do not reject your memorial stone,
Seeing that I should, in so doing,
Deprive you of honor to yourselves.

ARCHIBALD HIGBIE

I loathed you, Spoon River. I tried to rise above you,
I was ashamed of you. I despised you
As the place of my nativity.
And there in Rome, among the artists,
Speaking Italian, speaking French,
I seemed to myself at times to be free
Of every trace of my origin.
I seemed to be reaching the heights of art
And to breathe the air that the masters breathed,
And to see the world with their eyes.
But still they'd pass my work and say:
"What are you driving at, my friend?
Sometimes the face looks like Apollo's,
At others it has a trace of Lincoln's."
There was no culture, you know, in Spoon River,
And I burned with shame and held my peace.
And what could I do, all covered over

And weighted down with western soil,
Except aspire, and pray for another
Birth in the world, with all of Spoon River
Rooted out of my soul?

FATHER MALLOY

You are over there, Father Malloy,
Where holy ground is, and the cross marks every grave,
Not here with us on the hill—
Us of wavering faith, and clouded vision
And drifting hope, and unforgiven sins.
You were so human, Father Malloy,
Taking a friendly glass sometimes with us,
Siding with us who would rescue Spoon River
From the coldness and the dreariness of village morality.
You were like a traveler who brings a little box of sand
From the wastes about the pyramids
And makes them real and Egypt real.
You were a part of and related to a great past,
And yet you were so close to many of us.
You believed in the joy of life.
You did not seem to be ashamed of the flesh.
You faced life as it is,
And as it changes.
Some of us almost came to you, Father Malloy,
Seeing how your church had divined the heart,
And provided for it,
Through Peter the Flame,
Peter the Rock.

LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,

And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE


Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

WILLIAM H. HERNDON

There by the window in the old house
Perched on the bluff, overlooking miles of valley,
My days of labor closed, sitting out life's decline,
Day by day did I look in my memory,
As one who gazes in an enchantress' crystal globe,
And I saw the figures of the past,
As if in a pageant glassed by a shining dream,
Move through the incredible sphere of time.
And I saw a man arise from the soil like a fabled giant
And throw himself over a deathless destiny,
Master of great armies, head of the republic,
Bringing together into a dithyramb of recreative song
The epic hopes of a people;
At the same time Vulcan of sovereign fires,
Where imperishable shields and swords were beaten out
From spirits tempered in heaven.
Look in the crystal! See how he hastens on
To the place where his path comes up to the path
Of a child of Plutarch and Shakespeare.
O Lincoln, actor indeed, playing well your part,
And Booth, who strode in a mimic play within the play,
Often and often I saw you,
As the cawing crows winged their way to the wood
Over my house-top at solemn sunsets,
There by my window,
Alone.

RUTHERFORD MCDOWELL

They brought me ambrotypes
Of the old pioneers to enlarge.
And sometimes one sat for me—
Some one who was in being
When giant hands from the womb of the world
Tore the republic.



What was it in their eyes?—
For I could never fathom
That mystical pathos of drooped eyelids,
And the serene sorrow of their eyes.
It was like a pool of water,
Amid oak trees at the edge of a forest,
Where the leaves fall,
As you hear the crow of a cock
From a far-off farm house, seen near the hills
Where the third generation lives, and the strong men
And the strong women are gone and forgotten.
And these grand-children and great grand-children
Of the pioneers!—
Truly did my camera record their faces, too,
With so much of the old strength gone,
And the old faith gone,
And the old mastery of life gone,
And the old courage gone,
Which labors and loves and suffers and sings
Under the sun!

ARLO WILL

Did you ever see an alligator
Come up to the air from the mud,
Staring blindly under the full glare of noon?
Have you seen the stabled horses at night
Tremble and start back at the sight of a lantern?
Have you ever walked in darkness
When an unknown door was open before you
And you stood, it seemed, in the light of a thousand candles
Of delicate wax?
Have you walked with the wind in your ears
And the sunlight about you
And found it suddenly shine with an inner splendor?
Out of the mud many times,

Before many doors of light,
Through many fields of splendor,
Where around your steps a soundless glory scatters
Like new-fallen snow,
Will you go through earth, O strong of soul,
And through unnumbered heavens
To the final flame!

AARON HATFIELD

Better than granite, Spoon River,
Is the memory-picture you keep of me
Standing before the pioneer men and women
There at Concord Church on Communion day.
Speaking in broken voice of the peasant youth
Of Galilee who went to the city
And was killed by bankers and lawyers;
My voice mingling with the June wind
That blew over wheat fields from Atterbury;
While the white stones in the burying ground
Around the Church shimmered in the summer sun.
And there, though my own memories
Were too great to bear, were you, O pioneers,
With bowed heads breathing forth your sorrow
For the sons killed in battle and the daughters
And little children who vanished in life's morning,
Or at the intolerable hour of noon.
But in those moments of tragic silence,
When the wine and bread were passed,
Came the reconciliation for us—
Us the ploughmen and the hewers of wood,
Us the peasants, brothers of the peasant of Galilee—
To us came the Comforter
And the consolation of tongues of flame!

WEBSTER FORD


Do you remember, O Delphic Apollo,
The sunset hour by the river, when Mickey M'Grew
Cried, "There's a ghost," and I, "It's Delphic Apollo";
And the son of the banker derided us, saying, "It's light
By the flags at the water's edge, you half-witted fools."
And from thence, as the wearisome years rolled on, long after
Poor Mickey fell down in the water tower to his death,
Down, down, through bellowing darkness, I carried
The vision which perished with him like a rocket which falls
And quenches its light in earth, and hid it for fear
Of the son of the banker, calling on Plutus to save me?
Avenged were you for the shame of a fearful heart,
Who left me alone till I saw you again in an hour
When I seemed to be turned to a tree with trunk and branches
Growing indurate, turning to stone, yet burgeoning
In laurel leaves, in hosts of lambent laurel,
Quivering, fluttering, shrinking, fighting the numbness
Creeping into their veins from the dying trunk and branches!
'Tis vain, O youth, to fly the call of Apollo.
Fling yourselves in the fire, die with a song of spring,
If die you must in the spring. For none shall look
On the face of Apollo and live, and choose you must
'Twixt death in the flame and death after years of sorrow,
Rooted fast in the earth, feeling the grisly hand,
Not so much in the trunk as in the terrible numbness
Creeping up to the laurel leaves that never cease
To flourish until you fall. O leaves of me
Too sere for coronal wreaths, and fit alone
For urns of memory, treasured, perhaps, as themes
For hearts heroic, fearless singers and livers—
Delphic Apollo!

SILENCE

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence of the sick
When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young.
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,



And the silence of an embittered friendship.
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and wife.
There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.
There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blessed Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrows, all hope.
And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

Alice Meynell

MATERNITY

One wept whose only child was dead
New-born, ten years ago.
"Weep not; he is in bliss," they said.
She answered, "Even so.

"Ten years ago was born in pain
A child not now forlorn.
But oh, ten years ago, in vain
A mother, a mother was born."

CHIMES

Brief on a flying night,
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt—oh, hark!—
A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing:
Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.

Max Michelson**O BROTHER TREE**

O brother tree! O brother tree! Tell to me, thy brother,
The secret of thy life,
The wonder of thy being.

My brother tree, my brother tree,
My heart is open to thee—
Reveal me all thy secrets.

Beloved tree, beloved tree,
I have shattered all my pride.
I love thee, brother, as myself.
Oh, explain to me thy wonders.

Beloved one, adored one,
I will not babble of it among fools—
I will tell it only to the unspoiled:
Reveal to me thy being.

I have watched thy leaves in sunshine,
I have heard them in the storm.
My heart drank a droplet of thy holy joy and wonder,
One drop from the ocean of thy wonder.

I am thy humble brother—I am thine own.
Reveal thy life to me,
Reveal thy calm joy to me,
Reveal to me thy serene knowledge.

THE BIRD

*From a branch
The bird called:*

I hold your heart!
I wash it
And scour it
With bits of song
Like pebbles;
And your doubts
And your sorrows
Fall—drip, drip, drip—
Like dirty water.
I pipe to it
In little notes
Of life clear as a pool,
And of death
Clearer still;
And I swoop with it
In the blue
And in the nest
Of a cloud.

STORM

Storm,
Wild one,
Take me in your whirl,
In your giddy reel,
In your shot-like leaps and flights.
Hear me call—stop and hear.
I know you, blusterer; I know you, wild one—
I know your mysterious call.

A HYMN TO NIGHT

Come, mysterious night;
Descend and nestle to us.

Descend softly on the houses
We built with pride,
Without worship.
Fold them in your veil,
Spill your shadows.

Come over our stores and factories,
Hide our pride—our shame—
With your nebulous wings.

Come down on our cobbled streets:
Unleash your airy hounds.
Come to the sleepers, night;
Light in them your fires.

LOVE LYRIC

Stir—
Shake off sleep.
Your eyes are the soul of clear waters—
Pigeons
In a city street.

Suns now dead
Have tucked away of their gold for your hair:
My buried mouth still tastes their fires.

A tender god built your breasts—
Apples of desire;
Their whiteness slakes the throat;
Their form soothes like honey.

Wake up!
 Or the song-bird in my heart
 Will peck open the shell of your dreams.

.
 Sleep, my own,
 Soaring over rivers of fire.
 Sleep, my own,
 Wading waters of gold.

Joy is in my heart—
 It flutters around in my soul.
 . . . Softly—
 I hear the rosy dreams . . .

Edna St. Vincent Millay

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
 Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!
 Thy mists, that roll and rise!
 Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
 And all but cry with color! That gaunt crag
 To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
 World, world, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all
 But never knew I this.
 Here such a passion is
 As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
 Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
 My soul is all but out of me—let fall
 No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

ASHES OF LIFE

Love has gone and left me, and the days are all alike.

Eat I must, and sleep I will—and would that night were here!

But ah, to lie awake and hear the slow hours strike!

Would that it were day again, with twilight near!

Love has gone and left me, and I don't know what to do;

This or that or what you will is all the same to me;

But all the things that I begin I leave before I'm through—

There's little use in anything as far as I can see.

Love has gone and left me, and the neighbors knock and borrow,

And life goes on forever like the gnawing of a mouse.

And to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow

There's this little street and this little house.

THE SHROUD

Death, I say, my heart is bowed

Unto thine, O mother!

This red gown will make a shroud

Good as any other.

(I, that would not wait to wear

My own bridal things,

In a dress dark as my hair

Made my answerings.

I, to-night, that till he came

Could not, could not wait,

In a gown as bright as flame

Held for them the gate.)

Death, I say, my heart is bowed
 ↳to thine, O mother!
This red gown will make a shroud
 Good as any other.

Harold Monro

GREAT CITY

When I returned at sunset,
The serving-maid was singing softly
Under the dark stairs, and in the house
Twilight had entered like a moon-ray.
Time was so dead I could not understand
The meaning of midday or of midnight,
But like falling waters, falling, hissing, falling,
Silence seemed an everlasting sound.

I sat in my room,
And watched sunset,
And saw starlight.
I heard the tramp of homing men,
And the last call of the last child;
Then a lone bird twittered,
And suddenly, beyond the housetops,
I imagined dew in the country,
In the hay, on the buttercups;
The rising moon,
The scent of early night;
The songs, the echoes,
Dogs barking,
Day closing,
Gradual slumber,
Sweet rest.

When all the lamps were lighted in the town
I passed into the street ways and I watched,
Wakeful, almost happy,
And half the night I wandered in the street.

YOUTH IN ARMS

Happy boy, happy boy,
David the immortal-willed,
Youth a thousand thousand times
Slain, but not once killed,
Swaggering again today
In the old contemptuous way;

Leaning backward from your thigh
Up against the tinselled bar—
Dust and ashes! is it you?
Laughing, boasting, there you are!
First we hardly recognized you
In your modern avatar.

Soldier, rifle, brown khaki—
Is your blood as happy so?
Where's your sling or painted shield,
Helmet, pike or bow?
Well, you're going to the wars—
That is all you need to know.

Graybeards plotted. They were sad.
Death was in their wrinkled eyes.
At their tables—with their maps,
Plans and calculations—wise
They all seemed; for well they knew
How ungrudgingly Youth dies.

At their green official baize
They debated all the night
Plans for your adventurous days
Which you followed with delight,
Youth in all your wanderings,
David of a thousand slings.

THE STRANGE COMPANION

A Fragment

That strange companion came on shuffling feet,
Passed me, then turned, and touched my arm.

He said (and he was melancholy,
And both of us looked fretfully,
And slowly we advanced together),
He said: "I bring you your inheritance."

I watched his eyes; they were dim.
I doubted him, watched him, doubted him . . .
But, in a ceremonious way,
He said: "You are too grey:
Come, you must be merry for a day."

And I, because my heart was dumb,
Because the life in me was numb,
Cried: "I will come. I *will* come."

So, without another word,
We two jaunted on the street.
I had heard, often heard,
The shuffling of those feet of his,
The shuffle of his feet.

And he muttered in my ear
Such a wheezy jest
As a man may often hear—
Not the worst, not the best
That a man may hear.

Then he murmured in my face
Something that was true.
He said: "I have known this long, long while,
All there is to know of you."
And the light of the lamp cut a strange smile
On his face, and we muttered along the street,
Good enough friends, on the usual beat.

We lived together long, long.
We were always alone, he and I.
We never smiled with each other;
We were like brother and brother,
Dimly accustomed.

Can a man know
Why he must live, or where he should go?

He brought me that joke or two,
And we roared with laughter, for want of a smile,
As every man in the world might do.
He who lies all night in bed
Is a fool, and midnight will crush his head.

When he threw a glass of wine in my face
One night, I hit him, and we parted;
But in a short space
We came back to each other melancholy-hearted,
Told our pain,
Swore we would not part again.

One night we turned a table over
The body of some slain fool to cover,
And all the company clapped their hands;
So we spat in their faces,
And travelled away to other lands.

I wish for every man he find
A strange companion so
Completely to his mind
With whom he everywhere may go.

Harriet Monroe

THE HOTEL

The long resounding marble corridors, the shining parlors with
shining women in them.
The French room, with its gilt and garlands under plump little
tumbling painted Loves.
The Turkish room, with its jumble of many carpets and its stiffly
squared un-Turkish chairs.
The English room, all heavy crimson and gold, with spreading
palms lifted high in round green tubs. •
The electric lights in twos and threes and hundreds, made into
festoons and spirals and arabesques, a maze and magic of
bright persistent radiance.
The people sitting in corners by twos and threes, and cooing to-
gether under the glare.
The long rows of silent people in chairs, watching with eyes that
see not while the patient hand tangles the air with music.
The bell-boys marching in with cards, and shouting names over
and over into ears that do not heed.
The stout and gorgeous dowagers in lacy white and lilac, bedizened
with many jewels, with smart little scarlet or azure hats on
their gray-streaked hair.

- The business men in trim and spotless suits, who walk in and out with eager steps, or sit at the desks and tables, or watch the shining women.
- The telephone girls forever listening to far voices, with the silver band over their hair and the little black caps obliterating their ears.
- The telegraph tickers sounding their perpetual chit—chit-chit from the uttermost ends of the earth.
- The waiters, in black swallow-tails and white aprons, passing here and there with trays of bottles and glasses.
- The quiet and sumptuous bar-room, with purplish men softly drinking in little alcoves, while the barkeeper, mixing bright liquors, is rapidly plying his bottles.
- The great bedecked and gilded café, with its glitter of a thousand mirrors, with its little white tables bearing gluttonous dishes whereto bright forks, held by pampered hands, flicker daintily back and forth.
- The white-tiled, immaculate kitchen, with many little round blue fires, where white-clad cooks are making spiced and flavored dishes.
- The cool cellars filled with meats and fruits, or layered with sealed and bottled wines mellowing softly in the darkness.
- The invisible stories of furnaces and machines, burrowing deep into the earth, where grimy workmen are heavily laboring.
- The many-windowed stories of little homes and shelters and sleeping-places, reaching up into the night like some miraculous, high-piled honey-comb of wax-white cells.
- The clothes inside of the cells—the stuffs, the silks, the laces; the elaborate delicate disguises that wait in trunks and drawers and closets, or bedrape and conceal human flesh.
- The people inside of the clothes, the bodies white and young, bodies fat and bulging, bodies wrinkled and wan, all alike veiled by fine fabrics, sheltered by walls and roofs, shut in from the sun and stars.

The soul inside of the bodies—the naked souls; souls weazen and weak, or proud and brave; all imprisoned in flesh, wrapped in woven stuffs, enclosed in thick and painted masonry, shut away with many shadows from the shining truth.
God inside of the souls, God veiled and wrapped and imprisoned and shadowed in fold on fold of flesh and fabrics and mockeries; but ever alive, struggling and rising again, seeking the light, freeing the world.

THE TURBINE

To W. S. M.

Look at her—there she sits upon her throne
As ladylike and quiet as a nun!
But if you cross her—whew! her thunderbolts
Will shake the earth! She's proud as any queen,
The beauty—knows her royal business too,
To light the world, and does it night by night
When her gay lord, the sun, gives up his job.
I am her slave; I wake and watch and run
From dark till dawn beside her. All the while
She hums there softly, purring with delight
Because men bring the riches of the earth
To feed her hungry fires. I do her will
And dare not disobey, for her right hand
Is power, her left is terror, and her anger
Is havoc. Look—if I but lay a wire
Across the terminals of yonder switch
She'll burst her windings, rip her casings off,
And shriek till envious Hell shoots up its flames,
Shattering her very throne. And all her people,
The laboring, trampling, dreaming crowds out there—
Fools and the wise who look to her for light—
Will walk in darkness through the liquid night
Submerged.

Sometimes I wonder why she stoops
To be my friend—oh yes, who talks to me
And sings away my loneliness; my friend
Though I am trivial and she sublime.
Hard-hearted?—No, tender and pitiful,
As all the great are. Every arrogant grief
She comforts quietly, and all my joys
Dance to her measures through the tolerant night.
She talks to me, tells me her troubles too,
Just as I tell her mine. Perhaps she feels
An ache deep down—that agonizing stab
Of grit grating her bearings; then her voice
Changes its tune, it wails and calls to me
To soothe her anguish, and I run, her slave,
Probe like a surgeon and relieve the pain.

We have our jokes too, little mockeries
That no one else in all the swarming world
Would see the point of. She will laugh at me
To show her power: maybe her carbon packings
Leak steam, and I run madly back and forth
To keep the infernal fiends from breaking loose:
Suddenly she will throttle them herself
And chuckle softly, far above me there,
At my alarms.

But there are moments—hush!—
When my turn comes; her slave can be her master,
Conquering her he serves. For she's a woman,
Gets bored there on her throne, tired of herself,
Tingles with power that turns to wantonness.
Suddenly something's wrong—she laughs at me,
Bedevils the frail wires with some mad caress
That thrills blind space, calls down ten thousand lightnings
To ruin her pomp and set her spirit free.
Then with this puny hand, swift as her threat,

Must I beat back the chaos, hold in leash
Destructive furies, rescue her—even her—
From the fierce rashness of her truant mood,
And make me lord of far and near a moment,
Startling the mystery. Last night I did it—
Alone here with my hand upon her heart
I faced the mounting fiends and whipped them down;
And never a wink from the long file of lamps
Betrayed her to the world.

So there she sits,
Mounted on all the ages, at the peak
Of time. The first man dreamed of light, and dug
The sodden ignorance away, and cursed
The darkness; young primeval races dragged
Foundation stones, and piled into the void
Rage and desire; the Greek mounted and sang
Promethean songs and lit a signal fire:
The Roman bent his iron will to forge
Deep furnaces; slow epochs riveted
With hope the secret chambers: till at last
We, you and I, this living age of ours,
A new-winged Mercury, out of the skies
Filch the wild spirit of light, and chain him there
To do her will forever.

Look, my friend,
Here is a sign! What is this crystal sphere—
This little bulb of glass I lightly lift,
This iridescent bubble a child might blow
Out of its brazen pipe to hold the sun—
What strange toy is it? In my hand it lies
Cold and inert, its puny artery—
That curling cobweb film—ashen and dead.
But now—a twist or two—let it but touch
The hem, far trailing, of my lady's robe,

And look, the burning life-blood of the stars
Leaps to its heart, and glows against the dark,
Kindling the world.

Even so I touch her garment,
Her servant through the quiet night; and thus
I lay my hand upon the Pleiades
And feel their throb of fire. Grandly she gives
To me unworthy; woman inscrutable,
Scatters her splendors through my darkness, leads me
Far out into the workshop of the worlds.
There I can feel those infinite energies
Our little earth just gnaws at through the ether,
And see the light our sunshine hides. Out there,
Close to the heart of life, I am at peace.

ON THE PORCH

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain:

Oh, billow on billow,
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war.
Over me—down—down—
Lunges and plunges
The huge gun with its one blind eye,
The armored train,
And, swooping out of the sky,
The aeroplane.

Down—down—
The army proudly swinging
Under gay flags,
The glorious dead heaped up like rags,
A church with bronze bells ringing,
A city all towers,
Gardens of lovers and flowers,
The round world swinging
In the light of the sun:
All broken, undone,
All down—under
Black surges of thunder . . .

Oh, billow on billow
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war . . .

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain.

THE WONDER OF IT

How wild, how witch-like weird that life should be!
That the insensate rock dared dream of me,
And take to bursting out and burgeoning—
Oh, long ago—yo ho!—
And wearing green! How stark and strange a thing
That life should be!

Oh, mystic mad, a rigadoon of glee,
That dust should rise, and leap alive, and flee

A-foot, a-wing, and shake the deeps with cries—
Oh, far away—yo-hay!
What moony masque, what arrogant disguise
That life should be!

THE INNER SILENCE

Noises that strive to tear
Earth's mantle soft of air
And break upon the stillness where it dwells:
The noise of battle and the noise of prayer,
The cooing noise of love that softly tells
Joy's brevity, the brazen noise of laughter—
All these affront me not, nor echo after
Through the long memories.
They may not enter the deep chamber where
Forever silence is.

Silence more soft than spring hides in the ground
Beneath her budding flowers;
Silence more rich than ever was the sound
Of harps through long warm hours.
It's like a hidden vastness, even as though
Great suns might there beat out their measures slow,
Nor break the hush mightier than they.
There do I dwell eternally,
There where no thought may follow me,
Nor stillest dreams whose pinions plume the way.

LOVE SONG

I love my life, but not too well
To give it to thee like a flower,
So it may pleasure thee to dwell
Deep in its perfume but an hour.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To sing it note by note away,
So to thy soul the song may tell
The beauty of the desolate day.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life but not too well
To cast it like a cloak on thine,
Against the storms that sound and swell
Between thy lonely heart and mine.
I love my life, but not too well.

A FAREWELL

Good-by!—no, do not grieve that it is over,
The perfect hour;
That the winged joy, sweet honey-loving rover,
Flits from the flower.

Grieve not—it is the law. Love will be flying—
Oh, love and all.
Glad was the living—blessed be the dying!
Let the leaves fall.

LULLABY

My little one, sleep softly
Among the toys and flowers.
Sleep softly, O my first-born son,
Through all the long dark hours.
And if you waken far away
I shall be wandering too.
If far away you run and play
My heart must follow you,

Sleep softly, O my baby,
And smile down in your sleep.
Here are red rose-buds for your bed—
Smile, and I will not weep.
We made our pledge—you did not fear
To go—why then should I?
Though long you sleep, I shall be near;
So hush—we must not cry.

Sleep softly, dear one, softly—
They can not part us now;
Forever rest here on my breast,
My kiss upon your brow.
What though they hide a little grave
With dream-flowers false or true?
What difference? We will just be brave
Together—I and you.

PAIN

She heard the children playing in the sun,
And through her window saw the white-stemmed trees
Sway like a film of silver in the breeze
Under the purple hills; and one by one
She noted chairs and cabinets, and spun
The pattern of her bed's pale draperies:
Yet all the while she knew that each of these
Was a dull lie, in irony begun.
For down in hell she lay, whose livid fires
Love may not quench, whose pangs death may not quell.
The round immensity of earth and sky
Shrank to a point that speared her. Loves, desires,
Darkened to torturing ministers of hell,
Whose mockery of joy deepened the lie.

Little eternities the black hours were,
That no beginning knew, that knew no end.
Day waned, and night came like a faithless friend,
Bringing no joy; till slowly over her
A numbness grew, and life became a blur,
A silence, an oblivion, a dark blend
Of dim lost agonies, whose downward trend
Led into time's eternal sepulchre.
And yet, when, after aeons infinite
Of dark eclipse she woke—lo, it was day!
The pictures hung upon the walls, each one;
Under the same rose-patterned coverlet
She lay; spring was still young, and still the play
Of happy children sounded in the sun.

THE WATER OUZEL

Little brown surf-bather of the mountains!
Spirit of foam, lover of cataracts, shaking your wings in falling
waters!
Have you no fear of the roar and rush when Nevada plunges—
Nevada, the shapely dancer, feeling her way with slim white
fingers?
How dare you dash at Yosemite the mighty—
Tall, white-limbed Yosemite, leaping down, down, over the
cliff?
Is it not enough to lean on the blue air of mountains?
Is it not enough to rest with your mate at timber-line, in bushes
that hug the rocks?
Must you fly through mad waters where the heaped-up granite
breaks them?
Must you batter your wings in the torrent?
Must you plunge for life or death through the foam?

THE PINE AT TIMBER-LINE

What has bent you,
Warped and twisted you,
Torn and crippled you?—
What has embittered you,
O lonely tree?

You search the rocks for a footing,
 dragging scrawny roots;
You bare your thin breast to the storms,
 and fling out wild arms behind you;
You throw back your witch-like head,
 with wisps of hair stringing the wind.

You fight with the snows,
You rail and shriek at the tempests.
Old before your time, you challenge the cold stars.

Be still, be satisfied!
Stand straight like your brothers in the valley,
The soft green valley of summer down below.

Why front the endless winter of the peak?
Why seize the lightning in your riven hands?
Why cut the driven wind and shriek aloud?

Why tarry here?

MOUNTAIN SONG

I have not where to lay my head:
 Upon my breast no child shall lie;
For me no marriage feast is spread:
 I walk alone under the sky.

My staff and scrip I cast away—
Light-burdened to the mountain height!
Climbing the rocky steep by day,
Kindling my fire against the night.

The bitter hail shall flower the peak,
The icy wind shall dry my tears.
Strong shall I be, who am but weak,
When bright Orion spears my fears.

Under the horned moon I shall rise
Up-swinging on the scarf of dawn.
The sun, searching with level eyes,
Shall take my hand and lead me on.

Wide flaming pinions veil the West—
Ah, shall I find? and shall I know?
My feet are bound upon the Quest—
Over the Great Divide I go.

John G. Neihardt

PRAYER FOR PAIN

I do not pray for peace nor ease,
Nor truce from sorrow:
No suppliant on servile knees
Begs here against to-morrow!

Lean flame against lean flame we flash,
O Fates that meet me fair;
Blue steel against blue steel we clash—
Lay on, and I shall dare!

But Thou of deeps the awful Deep,
Thou Breather in the clay,
Grant this my only prayer—Oh, keep
My soul from turning gray!

For until now, whatever wrought
Against my sweet desires,
My days were smitten harps strung taut,
My nights were slumberous lyres.

And howsoe'er the hard blow rang
Upon my battered shield,
Some lark-like, soaring spirit sang
Above my battle-field.

And through my soul of stormy night
The zigzag blue flame ran.
I asked no odds—I fought my fight—
Events against a man.

But now—at last—the gray mist chokes
And numbs me. Leave me pain!
Oh, let me feel the biting strokes,
That I may fight again!

ENVOI

Oh, seek me not within a tomb—
Thou shalt not find me in the clay!
I pierce a little wall of gloom
To mingle with the day!

I brothered with the things that pass,
Poor giddy joy and puckered grief;
I go to brother with the grass
And with the sunning leaf.

Not death can sheathe me in a shroud;
A joy-sword whetted keen with pain,
I join the armies of the cloud,
The lightning and the rain.


Oh, subtle in the sap athrill,
Athletic in the glad uplift,
A portion of the cosmic will,
I pierce the planet-drift.

My God and I shall interknit
As rain and ocean, breath and air;
And oh, the luring thought of it
Is prayer!

Yone Noguchi

THE POET

Out of the deep and the dark,
A sparkling mystery, a shape,
Something perfect,
Comes like the stir of the day:
One whose breath is an odor,
Whose eyes show the road to stars,
The breeze in his face,
The glory of heaven on his back.
He steps like a vision hung in air,
Diffusing the passion of eternity;
His abode is the sunlight of morn,
The music of eve his speech:
In his sight,
One shall turn from the dust of the grave,
And move upward to the woodland.



I HAVE CAST THE WORLD

I have cast the world,
and think me as nothing.
Yet I feel cold on snow-falling day,
And happy on flower day.

Grace Fallow Norton

ALLEGRA AGONISTES

A gleam of gold in gloom and gray,
A call from out a fairer day.
O pang at heart and ebbing blood!
(Hush, bread and salt should be thy mood,
Stern woman of the Brotherhood.)

Clamor of golden tones and tunes,
Hunt of faint horns, breath of bassoons;
They wound my soul again; I lie
Face earthward in fresh agony.
Oh, give me joy before I die!

World, world, I could have danced for thee,
And I had tales and minstrelsy;
Kept fairer, I had been more good.
(Hush, bread and salt should be thy mood,
Soul of the breadless Brotherhood.)

Some thou hast formed to play thy part,
The bold, the cold, the hard of heart.
Thy rue upon my lips I toss.
Rose was my right. O world, the loss,
When Greek limbs writhe upon the cross!

MAKE NO VOWS

I made a vow once, one only.
I was young and I was lonely.
When I grew strong I said: "This vow
Is too narrow for me now.
Who am I to be bound by old oaths?
I will change them as I change my clothes!"

But that ancient outworn vow
Was like fetters upon me now.
It was hard to break, hard to break;
Hard to shake from me, hard to shake.

I broke it by day, but it closed upon me at night.
He is not free who is free only in the sun-light.
He is not free who bears fetters in his dreams,
Nor he who laughs only by dark dream-fed streams.

Oh, it costs much bright coin of strength to live!
Watch, then, where all your strength you give!
For I, who would be so wild and wondrous now,
Must give, give, to break a burdening bitter vow.

I GIVE THANKS

There's one that I once loved so much
I am no more the same.
I give thanks for that transforming touch.
I tell you not his name.

He has become a sign to me
For flowers and for fire.
For song he is a sign to me
And for the broken lyre.

And I have known him in a book
And never touched his hand.
And he is dead—I need not look
For him through his green land.

Heaven may not be. I have no faith,
But this desire I have—
To take my soul on my last breath,
To lift it like a wave,

And surge unto his star and say,
His friendship had been heaven;
And pray, for clouds that closed his day
May light at last be given!

And say, he shone at noon so bright
I learned to run and rejoice!
And beg him for one last delight—
The true sound of his voice.

There's one that once moved me so much
I am no more the same;
And I pray I too, I too, may touch
Some heart with singing flame.

James Oppenheim

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains. . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,

By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

THE LONELY CHILD

Do you think, my boy, when I put my arms around you
To still your fears,
That it is I who conquer the dark and the lonely night?

My arms seem to wrap love about you,
As your little heart fluttering at my breast
Throbs love through me . . .

But, dear one, it is not your father:
Other arms are about you, drawing you near,
And drawing the Earth near, and the Night near,
And your father near. . . .

Some day you shall lie alone at nights,
As now your father lies;
And in those arms, as a leaf fallen on a tranquil stream,
Drift into dreams and healing sleep.

NOT OVERLOOKED

Though I am little as all little things,
Though the stars that pass over my tininess are as the sands of
the sea,
Though the garment of the night was made for a sky-giant
and does not fit me,
Though even in a city of men I am as nothing,

Yet at times the gift of life is almost more than I can bear. . . .
 I laugh with joyousness, the morning is a blithe holiday;
 And in the overrunning of my hardy bliss praise rises for the
 very breath I breathe.

How soaked the universe is with life—
 Not a cranny but is drenched!
 Ah, not even I was overlooked!

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies,
 With her blowing scarf of stars,
 And our earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossoming
 heart!
 Her feet are on the winds where space is deep;
 Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
 She hurries through the night to a far lover.

Patrick Orr

ANNIE SHORE AND JOHNNIE DOON

Annie Shore, 'twas, sang last night
 Down in South End saloon;
 A tawdry creature in the light,
 Painted cheeks, eyes over bright,
 Singing a dance-hall tune.

I'd be forgetting Annie's singing—
 I'd not have thought again—
 But for the thing that cried and fluttered
 Through all the shrill refrain:
 Youth crying above foul words, cheap music,
 And innocence in pain.

They sentenced Johnnie Doon today
For murder, stark and grim;
Death's none too dear a price, they say,
For such-like men as him to pay;
No need to pity him!

And Johnnie Doon I'd not be pitying—
I could forget him now—
But for the childish look of trouble
That fell across his brow,
For the twisting hands he looked at dumbly
As if they'd sinned, he knew not how.

IN THE MOHAVE

As I rode down the arroyo through yuccas belled with bloom
I saw a last year's stalk lift dried hands to the light,
Like age at prayer for death within a careless room,
Like one by day o'ertaken, whose sick desire is night.

And as I rode I saw a lean coyote lying
All perfect as in life upon a silver dune,
Save that his feet no more could flee the harsh light's spying,
Save that no more his shadow would cleave the sinking moon.

O cruel land, where form endures, the spirit fled!
You chill the sun for me with your gray sphinx's smile,
Brooding in the bright silence above your captive dead,
Where beat the heart of life so brief, so brief a while!

Seumas O'Sullivan

MY SORROW

My sorrow that I am not by the little dun,
By the lake of the starlings at Rosses under the hill—
And the larks there, singing over the fields of dew,
Or evening there, and the sedges still!
For plain I see now the length of the yellow sand,
And Lissadell far off and its leafy ways,
And the holy mountain whose mighty heart
Gathers into it all the colored days.
My sorrow that I am not by the little dun,
By the lake of the starlings at evening when all is still—
And still in whispering sedges the herons stand.
'Tis there I would nestle at rest till the quivering moon
Uprose in the golden quiet over the hill.

SPLENDID AND TERRIBLE

Splendid and terrible your love.
The searing pinions of its flight
Flamed but a moment's space above
The place where ancient memories keep
Their quiet; and the dreaming deep
Moved inly with a troubled light,
And that old passion woke and stirred
Out of its sleep.

Splendid and terrible your love.
I hold it to me like a flame;
I hold it like a flame above
The empty anguish of my breast.

There let it stay, there let it rest—
Deep in the heart whereto it came
Of old as some wind-wearied bird
Drops to its nest.

THE OTHERS

From our hidden places,
By a secret path,
We come in the moonlight
To the side of the green rath.

There the night through
We take our pleasure,
Dancing to such a measure
As earth never knew.

To dance and lilt
And song without a name,
So sweetly chanted
'Twould put a bird to shame.

And many a maiden
Is there, of mortal birth,
Her young eyes laden
With dreams of earth.

Music so piercing wild
And forest-sweet would bring
Silence on blackbirds singing
Their best in the ear of spring.

And many a youth entranced
Moves slow in the dreamy round,
His brave lost feet enchanted
With the rhythm of faery sound.

THE NEW POETRY

Oh, many a thrush and blackbird
Would fall to the dewy ground,
And pine away in silence
For envy of such a sound.

So the night through,
In our sad pleasure,
We dance to many a measure
That earth never knew.

Josephine Preston Peabody

CRADLE SONG

I

Lord Gabriel, wilt thou not rejoice
When at last a little boy's
Cheek lies heavy as a rose,
And his eyelids close?

Gabriel, when that hush may be,
This sweet hand all heedfully
I'll undo, for thee alone,
From his mother's own.

Then the far blue highways paven
With the burning stars of heaven
He shall gladden with the sweet
Hasting of his feet—

Feet so brightly bare and cool,
Leaping, as from pool to pool;
From a little laughing boy
Splashing rainbow joy!

Gabriel, wilt thou understand
How to keep his hovering hand—
 Never shut, as in a bond,
 From the bright beyond?

Nay, but though it cling and close
Tightly as a clinging rose,
 Clasp it only so—aright,
 Lest his heart take fright.

*(Dormi, dormi, tu;
The dusk is hung with blue.)*

II

Lord Michael, wilt not thou rejoice
When at last a little boy's
 Heart, a shut-in murmuring bee,
 Turns him into thee?

Wilt thou heed thine armor well—
To take his hand from Gabriel,
 So his radiant cup of dream
 May not spill a gleam?

He will take thy heart in thrall,
Telling o'er thy breastplate all
 Colors, in his bubbling speech,
 With his hand to each.

*(Dormi, dormi, tu,
Sapphire is the blue;
Pearl and beryl, they are called,
Chrysoprase and emerald,
Sard and amethyst.
Numbered so, and kissed.)*

THE NEW POETRY

Ah, but find some angel word
 For thy sharp, subduing sword!
 Yea, Lord Michael, make no doubt
 He will find it out:

(Dormi, dormi, tu!)
His eyes will look at you.

III

Last, a little morning space,
 Lead him to that leafy place
 Where Our Lady sits awake,
 For all mothers' sake.

Bosomed with the Blessèd One,
 He shall mind her of her Son,
 Once so folded from all harms,
 In her shrining arms.

(In her veil of blue,
Dormi, dormi, tu.)

So—and fare thee well.
 Softly—Gabriel . . .
 When the first faint red shall come,
 Bid the Day-star lead him home—
 For the bright world's sake—
 To my heart, awake.

THE CEDARS

All down the years the fragrance came,
 The mingled fragrance, with a flame,
 Of cedars breathing in the sun,
 The cedar-trees of Lebanon.

O thirst of song in bitter air,
And hope, wing-hurt from iron care,
What balm of myrrh and honey, won
From far-off trees of Lebanon!

Not from these eyelids yet have I
Ever beheld that early sky.
Why do they call me through the sun?—
Even the trees of Lebanon?

A SONG OF SOLOMON

King Solomon was the wisest man
Of all that have been kings.
He built an House unto the Lord;
And he sang of creeping things.


Of creeping things, of things that fly,
Or swim within the seas;
Of the little weed along the wall,
And of the cedar-trees.

And happier he, without mistake,
Than all men since alive.
God's House he built; and he did make
A thousand songs and five.

Ezra Pound

Δόξα

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.



THE NEW POETRY

Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of gray waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

THE RETURN

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering!

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the "Wing'd-with-Awe,"
inviolable.

Gods of that wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men!

PICCADILLY

Beautiful, tragical faces—
Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;
And, O ye vile, ye that might have been loved,
That are so sodden and drunken,
Who hath forgotten you?

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!

The crass, the coarse, the brazen,
God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do;
But oh, ye delicate, wistful faces,
Who hath forgotten you?

N. Y.

My City, my beloved, my white!
Ah, slender,
Listen! Listen to me, and I will breathe into thee a soul.
Delicately upon the reed, attend me!

*Now do I know that I am mad,
For here are a million people surly with traffic;
This is no maid.
Neither could I play upon any reed if I had one.*

My City, my beloved,
Thou art a maid with no breasts,
Thou art slender as a silver reed.
Listen to me, attend me!
And I will breathe into thee a soul,
And thou shalt live for ever.

In her is the end of breeding.
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.

She would like some one to speak to her,
And is almost afraid that I
will commit that indiscretion.

ORTUS

How have I labored?
How have I not labored
To bring her soul to birth,
To give these elements a name and a centre!

She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.
She has no name, and no place.
How have I labored to bring her soul into separation;
To give her a name and her being!

Surely you are bound and entwined,
You are mingled with the elements unborn;
I have loved a stream and a shadow.

I beseech you enter your life.
I beseech you learn to say "I"
When I question you:
For you are no part, but a whole;
No portion, but a being.

THE CHOICE

It is true that you say the gods are more use to you than fairies,
But for all that I have seen you on a high, white, noble horse,
Like some strange queen in a story.

It is odd that you should be covered with long robes and trailing
tendrils and flowers;

It is odd that you should be changing your face and resembling
some other woman to plague me;
It is odd that you should be hiding yourself in the cloud of beautiful
women, who do not concern me.

And I, who follow every seed-leaf upon the wind!
They will say that I deserve this.

THE GARRET

Come let us pity those who are better off than we are.
Come, my friend, and remember
that the rich have butlers and no friends,
And we have friends and no butlers.
Come let us pity the married and the unmarried.

Dawn enters with little feet
like a gilded Pavlova,
And I am near my desire.
Nor has life in it aught better
Than this hour of clear coolness,
the hour of waking together.

DANCE FIGURE

For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee

Dark-eyed,
O woman of my dreams,
Ivory sandaled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet.

I have not found thee in the tents,
In the broken darkness.
I have not found thee at the well-head
Among the women with pitchers.

Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders;
As new almonds stripped from the husk.

They guard thee not with eunuchs;
Not with bars of copper.
Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy rest.
A brown robe, with threads of gold woven in patterns,
 hast thou gathered about thee,
O Nathat-Ikanaie, "Tree-at-the-river."

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

Thy maidens are white like pebbles;
Their music about thee!

There is none like thee among the dancers;
None with swift feet.

FROM "NEAR PÉRIGORD"

Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due. Inferno, XXVIII, 125.

I loved a woman. The stars fell from heaven.
And always our two natures were in strife.
Bewildering spring, and by the Auvezère
Poppies and day's eyes in the green émail
Rose over us; and we knew all that stream,
And our two horses had traced out the valleys;
Knew the low flooded lands squared out with poplars,
In the young days when the deep sky befriended.

And great wings beat above us in the twilight,
And the great wheels in heaven
Bore us together . . . surging . . . and apart . . .
Believing we should meet with lips and hands.

High, high and sure . . . and then the counterthrust:
"Why do you love me? Will you always love me?
But I am like the grass, I can not love you."
Or, "Love, and I love and love you,
And hate your mind, not *you*, your soul, your hands."

So to this last estrangement, Tairiran!

There shut up in his castle, Tairiran's,
She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands,
Gone—ah, gone—untouched, unreachable!
She who could never live save through one person,
She who could never speak save to one person,
And all the rest of her a shifting change,
A broken bundle of mirrors . . . !

AN IMMORALITY

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

THE STUDY IN AESTHETICS

The very small children in patched clothing,
 Being smitten with an unusual wisdom,
 Stopped in their play as she passed them
 And cried up from their cobbles:

Guarda! Ahi, guarda! ch'e b'ea!

But three years after this
 I heard the young Dante, whose last name I do not know—
 For there are, in Sirmione, twenty-eight young Dantes and thirty-
 four Catulli;

And there had been a great catch of sardines,
 And his elders
 Were packing them in the great wooden boxes
 For the market in Brescia, and he
 Leapt about, snatching at the bright fish
 And getting in both of their ways;
 And in vain they commanded him to *sta fermo!*
 And when they would not let him arrange
 The fish in the boxes
 He stroked those which were already arranged,
 Murmuring for his own satisfaction
 This identical phrase:

Ch'e b'ea.

And at this I was mildly abashed.

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions.
 Let us express our envy for the man with a steady job and no worry
 about the future.

You are very idle, my songs;
 I fear you will come to a bad end.

You stand about the streets. You loiter at the corners and bus-stops,
 You do next to nothing at all.
 You do not even express our inner nobility;
 You will come to a very bad end.

And I? I have gone half cracked.
 I have talked to you so much
 that I almost see you about me,
 Insolent little beasts! Shameless! Devoid of clothing!

But you, newest song of the lot,
 You are not old enough to have done much mischief.
 I will get you a green coat out of China
 With dragons worked upon it.
 I will get you the scarlet silk trousers
 From the statue of the infant Christ at Santa Maria Novella;

Lest they say we are lacking in taste,
 Or that there is no caste in this family.

VILLANELLE: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HOUR

I

I had over-prepared the event—
 that much was ominous.
 With middle-aging care
 I had laid out just the right books,
 I almost turned down the right pages.

*Beauty is so rare a thing . . .
 So few drink of my fountain.*

So much barren regret!
 So many hours wasted!
 And now I watch from the window
 rain, wandering busses.

Their little cosmos is shaken—
the air is alive with that fact.
In their parts of the city
they are played on by diverse forces;

I had over-prepared the event.
Beauty is so rare a thing . . .
So few drink at my fountain.

Two friends: a breath of the forest . . .
Friends? Are people less friends
because one has just, at last, found them?

Twice they promised to come.
"Between the night and morning?"

Beauty would drink of my mind.
Youth would awhile forget
my youth is gone from me.
Youth would hear speech of beauty.

II

("Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?
Someone admired your works,
And said so frankly.

"Did you talk like a fool,
The first night?
The second evening?"

"*But* they promised again:
'Tomorrow at tea-time.'")

III

Now the third day is here—
no word from either;
No word from her nor him,
Only another man's note:
"Dear Pound, I am leaving England."

BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE

Simon Zelotes speaketh it sometime after the Crucifixion.

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh we drank his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company.
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere,
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no' get him a' in a book, I think,
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he.
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free.
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue,
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee.
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the gray o' the sea.

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging,
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Genseret
Wi' tway words spoke suddenly.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
 A mate of the wind and sea.
 If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
 They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
 Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God, is a gallant foe
 That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
 That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
 I have loved my God as maid to man—
 But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe
 that plays behind the veil,
 To meet your God as the night winds meet
 beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
 I have staked with my God for truth,
 I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
 His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
 But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
 Shall win at the turn of the game.
 I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
 But the ending is the same:
 Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
 Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God, is a gallant foe
that playeth behind the veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow
hath need of triple mail.

LA FRAISNE

Scene: The Ash Wood of Malvern

For I was a gaunt, grave councillor,
Being in all things wise, and very old;
But I have put aside this folly and the cold
That old age weareth for a cloak.

I was quite strong—at least they said so—
The young men at the sword-play;
But I have put aside this folly, being gay
In another fashion that more suiteth me.

I have curled mid the boles of the ash wood,
I have hidden my face where the oak
Spread his leaves over me, and the yoke
Of the old ways of men have I cast aside.

By the still pool of Mar-nan-otha
Have I found me a bride
That was a dog-wood tree some syne.
She hath called me from mine old ways;
She hath hushed my rancor of council,
Bidding me praise

Naught but the wind that flutters in the leaves.

She hath drawn me from mine old ways,
Till men say that I am mad;
But I have seen the sorrow of men, and am glad,

For I know that the wailing and bitterness are a folly.
And I? I have put aside all folly and all grief.
I wrapped my tears in an ellum leaf
And left them under a stone;
And now men call me mad because I have thrown
All folly from me, putting it aside
To leave the old barren ways of men,
Because my bride
Is a pool of the wood; and
Though all men say that I am mad
It is only that I am glad—
Very glad, for my bride hath toward me a great love
That is sweeter than the love of women
That plague and burn and drive one away.

Aie-e! 'Tis true that I am gay,
Quite gay, for I have her alone here
And no man troubleth us.

Once when I was among the young men . . .
And they said I was quite strong, among the young men . . .
Once there was a woman . . .
. . . but I forget . . . she was . . .
. . . I hope she will not come again.

. . . I do not remember . . .
I think she hurt me once, but . . .
That was very long ago.

I do not like to remember things any more.

I like one little band of winds that blow
In the ash trees here:
For we are quite alone,
Here mid the ash trees.

THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse;
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever, and forever.
Why should I climb the look-out?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-Yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
You dragged your feet when you went out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
Over the grass in the west garden—
They hurt me.
I grow older.
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you,
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

From the Chinese of Li Po.

From the Chinese of Li Po, usually considered the greatest poet of China: written by him while in exile about 760 A. D., to the Hereditary War-Councillor of Shu, "recollecting former companionship."

So-Kin of Rakuho, ancient friend, I now remember
That you built me a special tavern,
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.
With yellow gold and white jewels
 we paid for the songs and laughter,
And we were drunk for month after month,
 forgetting the kings and princes.
Intelligent men came drifting in, from the sea
 and from the west border,
And with them, and with you especially,
 there was nothing at cross-purpose;
And they made nothing of sea-crossing
 or of mountain-crossing,
If only they could be of that fellowship.
And we all spoke out our hearts and minds . . .
 and without regret.
And then I was sent off to South Wei,
 smothered in laurel groves,
And you to the north of Raku-hoku,
Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories between us.
And when separation had come to its worst
We met, and travelled together into Sen-Go
Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning and twisting
waters;
Into a valley of a thousand bright flowers . . .
 that was the first valley,
And on into ten thousand valleys
 full of voices and pine-winds.
With silver harness and reins of gold,
 prostrating themselves on the ground,

Out came the East-of-Kan foreman and his company;
And there came also the "True-man" of Shi-yo to meet me,
Playing on a jewelled mouth-organ.
In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us
more Sennin music;
Many instruments, like the sound of young phoenix broods.
And the foreman of Kan-Chu, drunk,
Danced because his long sleeves
Wouldn't keep still, with that music playing.
And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my head on his
lap,
And my spirit so high that it was all over the heavens.

And before the end of the day we were scattered like stars or
rain.
I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,
You back to your river-bridge.
And your father, who was brave as a leopard,
Was governor in Hei Shu and put down the barbarian rabble.
And one May he had you send for me, despite the long dis-
tance;
And what with broken wheels and so on, I won't say it wasn't
hard going . . .
Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.
And I was still going, late in the year,
 in the cutting wind from the north,
And thinking how little you cared for the cost . . .
 and you caring enough to pay it.
Then what a reception!
Red jade cups, food well set, on a blue jewelled table;
And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning;
And you would walk out with me to the western corner of the
castle,
To the dynastic temple, with the water about it clear as blue
jade,
With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and drums,

John Reed**SANGAR***To Lincoln Steffens*

Somewhere I read a strange, old, rusty tale
Smelling of war; most curiously named
The Mad Recreant Knight of the West.
Once, you have read, the round world brimmed with hate,
Stirred and revolted, flashed unceasingly
Facets of cruel splendor. And the strong
Harried the weak . . .

Long past, long past, praise God,
In these fair, peaceful, happy days.

The Tale:

Eastward the Huns break border,
Surf on a rotten dyke;
They have murdered the Eastern Warder
(His head on a pike).
"Arm thee, arm thee, my father!
Swift rides the Goddes-bane,
And the high nobles gather
On the plain!"

"O blind world-wrath!" cried Sangar,
"Greatly I killed in youth;
I dreamed men had done with anger
Through Goddes truth!"
Smiled the boy then in faint scorn,
Hard with the battle-thrill;
"Arm thee, loud calls the war-horn
And shrill!"

He has bowed to the voice stentorian,
Sick with thought of the grave—
He has called for his battered morion
And his scarred glaive.
On the boy's helm a glove
Of the Duke's daughter—
In his eyes splendor of love
And slaughter.

Hideous the Hun advances
Like a sea-tide on sand;
Unyielding, the haughty lances
Make dauntless stand.
And ever amid the clangor,
Butchering Hun and Hun,
With sorrowful face rides Sangar
And his son. . . .

Broken is the wild invader
(Sullied, the whole world's fountains);
They have penned the murderous raider
With his back to the mountains.
Yet though what had been mead
Is now a bloody lake,
Still drink swords where men bleed,
Nor slake.

Now leaps one into the press—
The hell 'twixt front and front—
Sangar, bloody and torn of dress
(He has borne the brunt).
"Hold!" cries, "Peace! God's peace!
Heed ye what Christus says—"
And the wild battle gave surcease
In amaze.

"When will ye cast out hate?
Brothers—my mad, mad brothers—
Mercy, ere it be too late,
These are sons of your mothers.
For sake of Him who died on Tree,
Who of all creatures, loved the least—"
"Blasphemer! God of Battles, He!"
Cried a priest.

"Peace!" and with his two hands
Has broken in twain his glaive.
Weaponless, smiling he stands—
(Coward or brave?)
"Traitor!" howls one rank, "Think ye
The Hun be our brother?"
And "Fear we to die, craven, think ye?"
The other.

Then sprang his son to his side,
His lips with slaver were wet,
For he had felt how men died
And was lustful yet;
(On his bent helm a glove
Of the Duke's daughter,
In his eyes splendor of love
And slaughter)—

Shouting, "Father no more of mine!
Shameful old man—abhorr'd,
First traitor of all our line!"
Up the two-handed sword.
He smote—fell Sangar—and then
Screaming, red, the boy ran
Straight at the foe, and again
Hell began. . . .

Oh, there was joy in Heaven when Sangar came.
 Sweet Mary wept, and bathed and bound his wounds,
 And God the Father healed him of despair,
 And Jesus gripped his hand, and laughed and laughed. . . .

Ernest Rhys

DAGONET'S CANZONET

A queen lived in the South;
 And music was her mouth,
 And sunshine was her hair,
 By day, and all the night
 The drowsy embers there
 Remember'd still the light;
My soul, was she not fair!

But for her eyes—they made
 An iron man afraid;
 Like sky-blue pools they were,
 Watching the sky that knew
 Itself transmuted there
 Light blue, or deeper blue;
My soul, was she not fair!

The lifting of her hands
 Made laughter in the lands
 Where the sun is, in the South:
 But my soul learnt sorrow there
 In the secrets of her mouth,
 Her eyes, her hands, her hair:
O soul, was she not fair!

A SONG OF HAPPINESS

Ah, Happiness:
Who called you "Earandel"?
(Winter-star, I think, that is);
And who can tell the lovely curve
By which you seem to come, then swerve
Before you reach the middle-earth?
And who is there can hold your wing,
Or bind you in your mirth,
Or win you with a least caress,
Or tear, or kiss, or anything—
Insensate Happiness?

Once I thought to have you
Fast there in a child:
All her heart she gave you,
Yet you would not stay.
Cruel, and careless,
Not half reconciled,
Pain you cannot bear;
When her yellow hair
Lay matted, every tress;
When those looks of hers,
Were no longer hers,
You went: in a day
She wept you all away.

Once I thought to give
You, plighted, holily—
No more fugitive,
Returning like the sea:
But they that share so well
Heaven must portion Hell
In their copartnery:

Care, ill fate, ill health,
Came we know not how
And broke our commonwealth.
Neither has you now.

Some wait you on the road,
Some in an open door
Look for the face you showed
Once there—no more.
You never wear the dress
You danced in yesterday;
Yet, seeming gone, you stay,
And come at no man's call:
Yet, laid for burial,
You lift up from the dead
Your laughing, spangled head.

Yes, once I did pursue
You, unpursuable;
Loved, longed for, hoped for you—
Blue-eyed and morning brow'd.
Ah, lovely Happiness!
Now that I know you well,
I dare not speak aloud
Your fond name in a crowd;
Nor conjure you by night,
Nor pray at morning-light,
Nor count at all on you:

But, at a stroke, a breath,
After the fear of death,
Or bent beneath a load;
Yes, ragged in the dress,
And houseless on the road,
I might surprise you there.
Yes: who of us shall say

When you will come, or where?
Ask children at their play,
The leaves upon the tree,
The ships upon the sea,
Or old men who survived,
And lived, and loved, and wived.
Ask sorrow to confess
Your sweet improvidence,
And prodigal expense
And cold economy,
Ah, lovely Happiness!

Edwin Arlington Robinson

THE MASTER

Lincoln as he appeared to one soon after the Civil War

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled,
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through;
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?—
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured, to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold—
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept, Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

JOHN GORHAM

"Tell me what you're doing over here, John Gorham—
Sighing hard and seeming to be sorry when you're not.
Make me laugh or let me go now, for long faces in the moonlight
Are a sign for me to say again a word that you forgot."

"I'm over here to tell you what the moon already
May have said or maybe shouted ever since a year ago;
I'm over here to tell you what you are, Jane Wayland,
And to make you rather sorry, I should say, for being so."

"Tell me what you're saying to me now, John Gorham,
Or you'll never see as much of me as ribbons any more;
I'll vanish in as many ways as I have toes and fingers,
And you'll not follow far for one where flocks have been before."

"I'm sorry now you never saw the flocks, Jane Wayland;
But you're the one to make of them as many as you need.
And then about the vanishing: it's I who mean to vanish;
And when I'm here no longer you'll be done with me indeed."

"That's a way to tell me what I am, John Gorham!
How am I to know myself until I make you smile?
Try to look as if the moon were making faces at you,
And a little more as if you meant to stay a little while."

"You are what it is that over rose-blown gardens
Makes a pretty flutter for a season in the sun.
You are what it is that with a mouse, Jane Wayland,
Catches him and let's him go and eats him up for fun."

"Sure I never took you for a mouse, John Gorham.
All you say is easy, but so far from being true
That I wish you wouldn't ever be again the one to think so;
For it isn't cats and butterflies that I would be to you."

"All your little animals are in one picture—
One I've had before me since a year ago to-night;
And the picture where they live will be of you, Jane Wayland,
Till you find a way to kill them or to keep them out of sight."

"Won't you ever see me as I am, John Gorham,
Leaving out the foolishness and all I never meant?
Somewhere in me there's a woman, if you know the way to find
her—
Will you like me any better if I prove it and repent?"

"I doubt if I shall ever have the time, Jane Wayland;
And I dare say all this moonlight lying round us might as well
Fall for nothing on the shards of broken urns that are forgotten,
As on two that have no longer much of anything to tell."

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

THE GROWTH OF LORRAINE

I

While I stood listening, discreetly dumb,
Lorraine was having the last word with me:
"I know," she said, "I know it, but you see
Some creatures are born fortunate, and some
Are born to be found out and overcome—
Born to be slaves, to let the rest go free;
And if I'm one of them (and I must be)
You may as well forget me and go home.

"You tell me not to say these things, I know,
But I should never try to be content:
I've gone too far; the life would be too slow.
Some could have done it—some girls have the stuff;
But I can't do it—I don't know enough.
I'm going to the devil." And she went.

II

I did not half believe her when she said
That I should never hear from her again;
Nor when I found a letter from Lorraine,
Was I surprised or grieved at what I read:
"Dear friend, when you find this, I shall be dead.
You are too far away to make me stop.
They say that one drop—think of it, one drop!—
Will be enough; but I'll take five instead.

"You do not frown because I call you friend;
For I would have you glad that I still keep
Your memory, and even at the end—
Impenitent, sick, shattered—cannot curse
The love that flings, for better or for worse,
This worn-out, cast-out flesh of mine to sleep."

CASSANDRA

I heard one who said: "Verily,
What word have I for children here?
Your Dollar is your only Word,
The wrath of it your only fear.

"You build it altars tall enough
To make you see, but you are blind;
You cannot leave it long enough
To look before you or behind.

"When Reason beckons you to pause,
You laugh and say that you know best;
But what it is you know, you keep
As dark as ingots in a chest.

"You laugh and answer, 'We are young;
Oh, leave us now, and let us grow:'
Not asking how much more of this
Will Time endure or Fate bestow.

"Because a few complacent years
Have made your peril of your pride,
Think you that you are to go on
Forever pampered and untried?

"What lost eclipse of history,
What bivouac of the marching stars,
Has given the sign for you to see
Millenniums and last great wars?

"What unrecorded overthrow
Of all the world has ever known,
Or ever been, has made itself
So plain to you, and you alone?

"Your Dollar, Dove and Eagle make
A Trinity that even you
Rate higher than you rate yourselves;
It pays, it flatters, and it's new.

"And though your very flesh and blood
Be what your Eagle eats and drinks,
You'll praise him for the best of birds,
Not knowing what the Eagle thinks.

"The power is yours, but not the sight;
You see not upon what you tread;
You have the ages for your guide,
But not the wisdom to be led.

"Think you to tread forever down
The merciless old verities?
And are you never to have eyes
To see the world for what it is?

"Are you to pay for what you have
With all you are?"—No other word
We caught, but with a laughing crowd
Moved on. None heeded, and few heard.

Carl Sandburg

CHICAGO

Hog-Butcher for the World,
Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight-handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen
your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm
boys.
And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer, Yes, it is true
I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is, On the faces
of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton
hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at
this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to
them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud
to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is
a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage
pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,

Shoveling,

Wrecking,

Planning,

Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white
teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man
laughs,

Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a
battle,

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under
his ribs the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of youth; half-
naked, sweating, proud to be Hog-butcher, Tool-maker,
Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads, and Freight-handler
to the Nation.

THE HARBOR

Passing through huddled and ugly walls,

By doorways where women haggard

Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,

Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,

Out from the huddled and ugly walls,

I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake,
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

SKETCH

The shadows of the ships
Rock on the crest
In the low blue lustre
Of the tardy and the soft inrolling tide.

A long brown bar at the dip of the sky
Puts an arm of sand in the span of salt.

The lucid and endless wrinkles
Draw in, lapse and withdraw.
Wavelets crumble and white spent bubbles
Wash on the floor of the beach.

Rocking on the crest
In the low blue lustre
Are the shadows of the ships.

LOST

Desolate and lone
All night long on the lake
Where fog trails and mist creeps,
The whistle of a boat

Calls and cries unendingly,
Like some lost child
In tears and trouble
Hunting the harbor's breast
And the harbor's eyes.

JAN KUBELIK

Your bow swept over a string, and a long low note quivered to
the air.

(A mother of Bohemia sobs over a new child, perfect, learning to
suck milk.)

Your bow ran fast over all the high strings fluttering and wild.
(All the girls in Bohemia are laughing on a Sunday afternoon in
the hills with their lovers.)

AT A WINDOW

Give me hunger,
O you gods that sit and give
The world its orders.
Give me hunger, pain and want,
Shut me out with shame and failure
From your doors of gold and fame,
Give me your shabbiest, weariest hunger!

But leave me a little love,
A voice to speak to me in the day end,
A hand to touch me in the dark room
Breaking the long loneliness.

In the dusk of day-shapes
Blurring the sunset,
One little wandering, western star

Thrust out from the changing shores of shadow.
Let me go to the window,
Watch there the day-shapes of dusk,
And wait and know the coming
Of a little love.

THE POOR

Among the mountains I wandered and saw blue haze and red crag
and was amazed;
On the beach where the long push under the endless tide maneuvers,
I stood silent;
Under the stars on the prairie watching the Dipper slant over the
horizon's grass, I was full of thoughts.
Great men, pageants of war and labor, soldiers and workers,
mothers lifting their children—these all I touched, and felt
the solemn thrill of them.
And then one day I got a true look at the Poor, millions of the Poor,
patient and toiling; more patient than crags, tides, and stars;
innumerable, patient as the darkness of night—and all broken,
humble ruins of nations.

THE ROAD AND THE END

I shall foot it
Down the roadway in the dusk,
Where shapes of hunger wander
And the fugitives of pain go by.

I shall foot it
In the silence of the morning,
See the night slur into dawn,
Hear the slow great winds arise
Where tall trees flank the way
And shoulder toward the sky.

The broken boulders by the road
Shall not commemorate my ruin.
Regret shall be the gravel under foot.
I shall watch for
Slim birds swift of wing
That go where wind and ranks of thunder
Dive the wild processions of rain.

The dust of the travelled road
Shall touch my hands and face.

KILLERS

I am singing to you
Soft as a man with a dead child speaks;
Hard as a man in handcuffs,
Held where he can not move:

Under the sun
Are sixteen million men,
Chosen for shining teeth,
Sharp eyes, hard legs,
And a running of young warm blood in their wrists.

And a red juice runs on the green grass;
And a red juice soaks the dark soil.
And the sixteen million are killing . . . and killing and
killing.

I never forget them day or night:
They beat on my head for memory of them;
They pound on my heart and I cry back to them,
To their homes and women, dreams and games.

I wake in the night and smell the trenches,
And hear the low stir of sleepers in lines—
Sixteen million sleepers and pickets in the dark:
Some of them long sleepers for always,
Some of them tumbling to sleep to-morrow for always,
Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak,
Eating and drinking, toiling . . . on a long job of killing.

Sixteen million men.

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

HANDFULS

Blossoms of babies
Blinking their stories
Come soft
On the dusk and the babble;
Little red gamblers,
Handfuls that slept in the dust.

Summers of rain,
Winters of drift,
Tell off the years;
And they go back

Who came soft—
Back to the sod,
To silence and dust;
Gray gamblers,
Handfuls again.

UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

Under the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker,
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful, unanswerable questions.

CHOOSE

The single clenched fist lifted and ready,
Or the open asking hand held out and waiting.
Choose:
For we meet by one or the other.

KIN

Brother, I am fire
Surging under the ocean floor.
I shall never meet you, brother—
Not for years, anyhow;
Maybe thousands of years, brother.
Then I will warm you,
Hold you close, wrap you in circles,
Use you and change you—
Maybe thousands of years, brother.

PLACES

Roses and gold
For you today,
And the flash of flying flags.

I will have
Ashes,
Dust in my hair,
Crushes of hoofs.

Your name
Fills the mouth
Of rich man and poor.
Women bring
Armfuls of flowers
And throw on you.

I go hungry
Down in dreams
And loneliness,
Across the rain
To slashed hills
Where men wait and hope for me.

JOY

Let a joy keep you.
Reach out your hands
And take it when it runs by,
As the Apache dancer
Clutches his woman.
I have seen them
Live long and laugh loud,
Sent on singing, singing,
Smashed to the heart
Under the ribs
With a terrible love.
Joy always,
Joy everywhere—
Let joy kill you!
Keep away from the little deaths.

THE GREAT HUNT

I can not tell you now;
When the wind's drive and whirl
Blow me along no longer,
And the wind's a whisper at last—
Maybe I'll tell you then—
some other time.

When the rose's flash to the sunset
Reels to the wrack and the twist,
And the rose is a red bygone,
When the face I love is going
And the gate to the end shall clang,
And it's no use to beckon or say, "So long"—
Maybe I'll tell you then—
some other time.

I never knew any more beautiful than you:
I have hunted you under my thoughts,
I have broken down under the wind
And into the roses looking for you.
I shall never find any
greater than you.

OUR PRAYER OF THANKS

God,
For the gladness here where the sun is shining at evening on the
weeds at the river,
Our prayer of thanks.

God,
For the laughter of children who tumble barefooted and bare-
headed in the summer grass,
Our prayer of thanks.

God,
For the sunset and the stars, the women and their white arms that
hold us,
Our prayer of thanks.

God,
If you are deaf and blind, if this is all lost to you,
God, if the dead in their coffins amid the silver handles on the
edge of town, or the reckless dead of war days thrown unknown
in pits, if these dead are forever deaf and blind and lost,
Our prayer of thanks.

God,
The game is all your way, the secrets and the signals and the
system; and so, for the break of the game and the first play
and the last,
Our prayer of thanks.

Clara Shanafelt

TO THEE

White foam flower, red flame flower
On my tree of delight.
Lean from the shadow
Like singing in sorrow—
Pale flower of thy smile, flame flower of thy touch,
In my night.

CAPRICE

Who will be naming the wind
That lifts me and leaves me;
Swellleth my budding flame,
Foully bereaves me?
From the land whose forgotten name
Man shall not find,
Blowest thou, wind?

A VIVID GIRL

Her face is fair and smooth and fine,
Childlike, with secret laughter lit,
Drooping in pity, bright with wit,
A flower, a flame—God fashioned it.
Who sees her tastes the sacred wine.

INVOCATION

O glass-blower of time,
Hast blown all shapes at thy fire?
Canst thou no lovelier bell,
No clearer bubble, clear as delight, inflate me—
Worthy to hold such wine
As was never yet trod from the grape,
Since the stars shed their light, since the moon
Troubled the night with her beauty?

PASTEL

She has a clear, wind-sheltered loveliness,
Like pale streams winding far and hills withdrawn
From the bright reaches of the noon. Dawn
Is her lifting fancy, but her heart
Is orchard boughs and dusk and quietness.

A GALLANT WOMAN

She burst fierce wine
From the tough skin of pain,
Like wind that wrings from rigid skies
A scant and bitter gleam,
Long after the autumnal dusk
Has folded all the valleys in.

SCHERZO

The elder's bridal in July,
Bright as a cloud!
A ripe blonde girl,
Billowing to the ground in foamy petticoats,
With breasts full-blown
Swelling her bodice.

But later
When the small black-ruddy berries
Tempt the birds to strip the stems,
And the leaves begin to yellow and fall off
While late summer's still in its green,
Then you look lank and used up,
Elder;
Your big bones stick out,
You're the kind of woman
Wears bleak at forty.

I'll take my constant pleasure
In a willow-tree that ripples silver
All the summer.
And when the winter comes in greasy rags
Like a half-naked beggar,
Lets out the plaited splendor
Of her bright and glancing hair.

Frances Shaw

WHO LOVES THE RAIN

Who loves the rain
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes,
Him will I follow through the storm;
And at his hearth-fire keep me warm;
Nor hell nor heaven shall that soul surprise,
Who loves the rain,
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes.

THE HARP OF THE WIND

My house stands high—
Where the harp of the wind
Plays all day,
Plays all night;
And the city light
Is far away.

Where hangs the harp that the winds play?—
High in the air—
Over the sea?

The long straight streets of the far-away town,
Where the lines of light go sweeping down,
Are the strings of its minstrelsy.

And the harp of the wind
Gives to the wind
A song of the city's tears;
Thin and faint, the cry of a child,
Plaint of the soul unreconciled,
A song of the passing years.

THE RAGPICKER

The Ragpicker sits and sorts her rags:
Silk and homespun and threads of gold
She plucks to pieces and marks with tags;
And her eyes are ice and her fingers cold.

The Ragpicker sits in the back of my brain;
Keenly she looks me through and through.
One flaming shred I have hidden away—
She shall not have my love for you.

COLOGNE CATHEDRAL

The little white prayers
Of Elspeth Fry
Float up the arches
Into the sky.

A little black bird
On the belfry high
Pecks at them
As they go by.

STAR THOUGHT

I shall see a star tonight
From a distant mountain height;
From a city you will see
The same star that shines on me.

'Tis not of the firmament
On a solar journey bent;
Fixed it is through time and weather;—
'Tis a thought we hold together.

THE CHILD'S QUEST

My mother twines me roses wet with dew;
Oft have I sought the garden through and through;
I cannot find the tree whereon
My mother's roses grew.

Seek not, O child, the tree whereon
Thy mother's roses grew.

My mother tells me tales of noble deeds;
Oft have I sought her book when no one heeds;
I cannot find the page, alas,
From which my mother reads.

Seek not, O child, to find the page
From which thy mother reads.

My mother croons me songs all soft and low,
Through the white night where little breezes blow;
Yet never when the morning dawns,
My mother's songs I know.

Seek not, O child, at dawn of day
Thy mother's songs to know.

LITTLE PAGAN RAIN SONG

In the dark and peace of my final bed,
The wet grass waving above my head,
At rest from love, at rest from pain,
I lie and listen to the rain.

Falling, softly falling,
Song of my soul that is free;
Song of my soul that has not forgot
The sleeping body of me.

When quiet and calm and straight I lie,
 High in the air my soul rides by:
 Shall I await thee, soul, in vain?
 Hark to the answer in the rain.

Falling, softly falling,
 Song of my soul that is free;
 Song of my soul that will not forget
 The sleeping body of me.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

SONGS OF THE COAST-DWELLERS

THE CHIEF'S PRAYER AFTER THE SALMON CATCH

O Kia-Kunæ, praise!
 Thou hast opened thy hand among the stars,
 And sprinkled the sea with food;
 The catch is great; thy children will live.
 See, on the roofs of the villages, the red meat drying;
 Another year thou hast encompassed us with life.
 Praise! Praise! Kunæ!
 O Father, we have waited with shut mouths,
 With hearts silent, and hands quiet,
 Waited the time of prayer;
 Lest with fears we should beset thee,
 And pray the unholy prayer of asking.
 We waited silently; and thou gavest life.

Oh, praise! Praise! Praise!

Open the silent mouths, the shut hearts, my tribe:
 Sing high the prayer of Thanksgiving,
 The prayer He taught in the beginning to the Kwakiutl—

The good rejoicing prayer of thanks.
As the sea sings on the wet shore, when the ice thunders
back,
And the blue water floats again, warm, shining, living,
So break thy ice-bound heart, and the cold lip's silence—
Praise Kunæ for life, as wings up-flying, as eagles to the sun.
Praise! Praise! Praise!

SONG OF WHIP-PLAITING

In the dawn I gathered cedar-boughs
For the plaiting of thy whip.
They were wet with sweet drops;
They still thought of the night.

All alone I shredded cedar-boughs,
Green boughs in the pale light,
Where the morning meets the sea,
And the great mountain stops.

Earth was very still.

I heard no sound but the whisper of my knife,
My black flint knife.
It whispered among the white strands of the cedar,
Whispered in parting the sweet cords for thy whip.
O sweet-smelling juice of cedar—
Life-ooze of love!
My knife drips:
Its whisper is the only sound in all the world!

Finer than young sea-lions' hairs
Are my cedar-strands:
They are fine as little roots deep down.
(O little roots of cedar
Far, far under the bosom of Tsa-Kumts!—

They have plaited her through with love.)
 Now, into my love-gift
 Closely, strongly, I will weave them—
 Little strands of pain!
 Since I saw thee
 Standing with thy torch in my doorway,
 Their little roots are deep in me.

In the dawn I gathered cedar-boughs:
 Sweet, sweet was their odor,
 They were wet with tears—
 The sweetness will not leave my hands,
 No, not in salt sea-washings:
 Tears will not wash away sweetness.
 I shall have sweet hands for thy service.

(Ah—sometimes—thou wilt be gentle?
 Little roots of pain are deep, deep in me
 Since I saw thee standing in my doorway.)

I have quenched thy torch—
 I have plaited thy whip.
 I am thy Woman!

NO ANSWER IS GIVEN

I am Ah-woa-te, the Hunter.

I met a maiden in the shadow of the rocks;
 Her eyes were strange and clear,
 Her fair lips were shaped like the bow of dawning.
 I asked her name,
 Striking my spear in the deep earth for resting.

“I am Kantlak, a maiden, named for the Morning.
 On the mountain-top I heard two eagles talking—
 The word was Love.

They cried it, beating their wings on each other
Until they bled; and she fell,
Yet, falling, still weakly cried it
To him soaring: and died.
I came to a mossy low valley of flowers.
There I saw Men-iak, the white grouse,
(White with chaste dreams, like the Spring Moon, fairer than
flowers).
Through the forest a dark bird swooped, with fierce eyes,
And Men-iak flew down to it.
Her white breast is red-dyed, she lies on the moss;
Yet faintly cries the same strange word.
Hunter, will you come to my little fire and tell me
What Love is?"

I could not see the maiden's face clearly, for the dusk,
Where she sat by her small fire—only her eyes.
In the little flicker I saw her feet; they were bare—
Tireless, slim brown feet.
I saw how fair her lips were—
I drew nearer to cast my log on the fire. I said:
"Maiden, I am the Hunter.
When dusk ends the chase I leave the Mighty Killing.
Far or near, where gleams some little fire,
I grope through the forest with my heavy log;
Till I find one by the fire, sitting alone without fuel.
I cast my log gladly into the fire—thus.
It grips, the flames mount, the warmth embraces.

"Almost I can see your face, Woman;
The bow of your fair lips is hot with speeded arrows,
Your strange clear eyes have darkened.
Fear not—our fire will outlast the dark."

"Hunter, what of the cold on the bleak hillside
When the log burns gray, and the fire is ashes?"
I replied, "I have never seen this:

When the fire burns low I am asleep."
 She said: "What of me, if I sleep not, and see the ashes?"
 I yawned: I said, "I know not;
 I wake in the sun and go forth."

The bow of her lips was like the moon's cold circle.
 She said, "Hunter, you have told me of Love!"
 "It may be so," I answered. I wished to sleep.
 She said, "Already it is ashes."
 I looked and saw that her face was gray,
 As if the wind had blown the ashes over it.
 I was angry; I said, "Better you had slept."
 She said, "Yes—but I lie bleeding on the moss,
 Crying this word."
 I answered, "This is so; but wherefore?" and asked, idly,
 "Wherefore remember him who brought to your lone little fire
 The log that now is ashes?"
 She shivered in the cold dawn;
 I saw that her eyes were darker than shadows.
 Her fair mouth was like my perfect bow,
 But I could fit no more arrows to it.

She said, "Hunter, see how gray are these rocks
 Where we have sheltered our brief night."
 I looked—they were ashen.
 She said: "See how they come together here—and here—
 As the knees, the breast, the great brow, the forgotten eyes,
 Of a woman,
 Sitting, waiting, stark and still,
 And always gray;
 Though hunters camp each night between her knees,
 And little fires are kindled and burned out in her hollows."
 It was so; the mountain was a stone woman sitting.
 Kantlak said: "She remembers him who turned her fire to ashes;
 She waits to know the meaning of her waiting—
 Why the love that wounded her can never be cast out."

I asked idly, "Who will tell her?"—
And laughed, for the sun was up. I reached for my **arrows**;
I drew my strong spear from the deep earth by her **feet**.
Kantlak looked up to the other gray face, and said,
"No answer is given."
Down to the cold white endless sea-shore
Slowly she went, with bent head.
A young deer cast its leaping shadow on the pool.
I ran upon the bright path, swaying my spear.

James Stephens

WHAT TOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

I saw God. Do you doubt it?
Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man. His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and
He looked upon the World and all about it:
I saw Him plainer than you see me now,
You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;
His look was all dissatisfied.
His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
"That star went always wrong, and from the start
I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand—
I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth, then I said: "Stay—

You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way;
And I will never move from where I stand."
He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
And stayed His hand.

BESSIE BOBTAIL

As down the street she wambled slow,
She had not got a place to go:
She had not got a place to fall
And rest herself—no place at all.
She stumped along and wagged her pate
And said a thing was desperate.

Her face was screwed and wrinkled tight
Just like a nut—and, left and right,
On either side she wagged her head
And said a thing; and what she said
Was desperate as any word
That ever yet a person heard.

I walked behind her for a while
And watched the people nudge and smile.
But ever as she went she said,
As left and right she swung her head,
—"Oh, God He knows," and "God He knows:"
And surely God Almighty knows.

HATE

My enemy came high,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,

That bitter heart and savage, said to me:
"Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem to us then a mystery
That we could hate each other."

Thus said he,
And did not turn away,
Waiting to hear what I might have to say.
But I fled quickly, fearing if I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

THE WASTE PLACES

I

As a naked man I go
Through the desert sore afraid,
Holding up my head although
I'm as frightened as a maid.

The couching lion there I saw
From barren rocks lift up his eye;
He parts the cactus with his paw,
He stares at me as I go by.

He would follow on my trace
If he knew I was afraid,
If he knew my hardy face
Hides the terrors of a maid.

In the night he rises and
He stretches forth, he snuffs the air;
He roars and leaps along the sand,
He creeps and watches everywhere.

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale,
Through the darkness I can see;
He lashes fiercely with his tail,
He would love to spring at me.

I am the lion in his lair;
I am the fear that frightens me;
I am the desert of despair
And the nights of agony.

Night or day, whate'er befall,
I must walk that desert land,
Until I can dare to call
The lion out to lick my hand.

II

As a naked man I tread
The gloomy forests, ring on ring,
Where the sun that's overhead
Cannot see what's happening.

There I go: the deepest shade,
The deepest silence pressing me;
And my heart is more afraid
Than a maiden's heart would be.

Every day I have to run
Underneath the demon tree,
Where the ancient wrong is done
While I shrink in agony.

There the demon held a maid
In his arms, and as she, daft,
Screamed again in fear, he laid
His lips upon her lips and laughed.

THE NEW POETRY

And she beckoned me to run,
And she called for help to me,
And the ancient wrong was done
Which is done eternally.

I am the maiden and the fear;
I am the sunless shade, the strife;
I the demon lips, the sneer
Showing under every life.

I must tread that gloomy way
Until I shall dare to run
And bear the demon with his prey
From the forest to the sun.

HAWKS

And as we walked the grass was faintly stirred;
We did not speak—there was no need to speak.
Above our heads there flew a little bird,
A silent one who feared that we might seek
Her hard-hid nest.

Poor little frightened one!
If we had found your nest that sunny day
We would have passed it by; we would have gone
And never looked or frightened you away.

O little bird! there's many have a nest,
A hard-found, open place, with many a foe;
And hunger and despair and little rest,
And more to fear than you can know.

Shield the nests where'er they be,
On the ground or on the tree;
Guard the poor from treachery.

DARK WINGS

Sing while you may, O bird upon the tree!
 Although on high, wide-winged above the day,
 Chill evening broadens to immensity,
 Sing while you may.

On thee, wide-hovering too, intent to slay,
 The hawk's slant pinion buoys him terribly—
 Thus near the end is of thy happy lay.

The day and thou and miserable me
 Dark wings shall cover up and hide away
 Where no song stirs of bird or memory:
 Sing while you may.

George Sterling

A LEGEND OF THE DOVE

Soft from the linden's bough,
 Unmoved against the tranquil afternoon,
 Eve's dove laments her now:
 "Ah, gone! long gone! shall not I find thee soon?"

That yearning in his voice
 Told not to Paradise a sorrow's tale:
 As other birds rejoice
 He sang, a brother to the nightingale.

By twilight on her breast
 He saw the flower sleep, the star awake;
 And calling her from rest,
 Made all the dawn melodious for her sake.

And then the Tempter's breath,
 The sword of exile and the mortal chain—
 The heritage of death
 That gave her heart to dust, his own to pain. . . .

In Eden desolate
 The seraph heard his lonely music swoon,
 As now, reiterate;
 "Ah, gone! long gone! shall not I find thee soon?"

KINDRED

Musing, between the sunset and the dark,
 As Twilight in unhesitating hands
 Bore from the faint horizon's underlands,
 Silvern and chill, the moon's phantasmal ark,
 I heard the sea, and far away could mark
 Where that unalterable waste expands
 In sevenfold sapphire from the mournful sands,
 And saw beyond the deep a vibrant spark.

There sank the sun Arcturus, and I thought:
 Star, by an ocean on a world of thine,
 May not a being, born like me to die,
 Confront a little the eternal Naught
 And watch our isolated sun decline—
 Sad for his evanescence, even as I?

OMNIA EXEUNT IN MYSTERIUM

The stranger in my gates—lo! that am I,
 And what my land of birth I do not know,
 Nor yet the hidden land to which I go.
 One may be lord of many ere he die,
 And tell of many sorrows in one sigh,
 But know himself he shall not, nor his woe,
 Nor to what sea the tears of wisdom flow;
 Nor why one star is taken from the sky.

An urging is upon him evermore,
And though he bide, his soul is wanderer,
Scanning the shadows with a sense of haste—
Where fade the tracks of all who went before:
A dim and solitary traveller
On ways that end in evening and the waste.

THE LAST DAYS

The russet leaves of the sycamore
Lie at last on the valley floor—
By the autumn wind swept to and fro
Like ghosts in a tale of long ago.
Shallow and clear the Carmel glides
Where the willows droop on its vine-walled sides.

The bracken-rust is red on the hill;
The pines stand brooding, somber and still;
Gray are the cliffs, and the waters gray,
Where the seagulls dip to the sea-born spray.
Sad November, lady of rain,
Sends the goose-wedge over again.

Wilder now, for the verdure's birth,
Falls the sunlight over the earth;
Kildees call from the fields where now
The banding blackbirds follow the plow;
Rustling poplar and brittle weed
Whisper low to the river-reed.

Days departing linger and sigh:
Stars come soon to the quiet sky;
Buried voices, intimate, strange,
Cry to body and soul of change;
Beauty, eternal fugitive,
Seeks the home that we cannot give.

Wallace Stevens

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music too.

Music is feeling then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their being throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed
For so much melody.

Upon the bank she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side:

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then the simpering Byzantines,
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
 The fitful tracing of a portal;
 But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
 So evenings die, in their green going,
 A wave, interminably flowing.
 So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
 The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
 So maidens die, to the auroral
 Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
 Of those white elders; but, escaping,
 Left only Death's ironic scraping.
 Now, in its immortality, it plays
 On the clear viol of her memory,
 And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

IN BATTLE

Death's nobility again
 Beautified the simplest men.
 Fallen Winkle felt the pride
 Of Agamemnon
 When he died.

What could London's
 Work and waste
 Give him—
 To that salty, sacrificial taste?

What could London's
 Sorrow bring—
 To that short, triumphant sting?

SUNDAY MORNING

I

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug, mingle to dissipate
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.
She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
As a calm darkens among water-lights.
The pungent oranges and bright, green wings
Seem things in some procession of the dead,
Winding across wide water, without sound.
The day is like wide water, without sound,
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
Dominion of the blood and sepulchre.

II

She hears, upon that water without sound,
A voice that cries: "The tomb in Palestine
Is not the porch of spirits lingering;
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay."
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable.
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

III

She says: "I am content when wakened birds,
Before they fly, test the reality
Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
Return no more, where, then, is paradise?"
There is not any haunt of prophecy,
Nor any old chimera of the grave,
Neither the golden underground, nor isle
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
Nor visionary South, nor cloudy palm
Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured
As April's green endures; or will endure
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
By the consummation of the swallow's wings.

IV

She says, "But in contentment I still feel
The need of some imperishable bliss."
Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams
And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths—
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness—
She makes the willow shiver in the sun
For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
She causes boys to bring sweet-smelling pears
And plums in ponderous piles. The maidens taste
And stray impassioned in the littering leaves.

V

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun—
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source.
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
The trees, like seraphim, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward.
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
Of men that perish and of summer morn—
And whence they came and whither they shall go,
The dew upon their feet shall manifest.

Ajan Syrian

THE SYRIAN LOVER IN EXILE REMEMBERS THEE,
LIGHT OF MY LAND

Rose and amber was the sunset on the river,
Red-rose the hills about Bingariz.
High upon their brows, the black tree-branches
Spread wide across the turquoise sky.
I saw the parrots fly—
A cloud of rising green from the long green grasses,
A mist of gold and green winging fast
Into the gray shadow-silence of the tamarisks.
Pearl-white and wild was the flood below the ford.
I ran down the long hot road to thy door;

Thy door shone—a white flower in the dusk lingering to close.
 The stars rose and stood above thy casement.
 I cast my cloak and climbed to thee,
 To thee, Makhir Subatu!

.

Naked she stood and glistening like the stars over her—
 Her hair trailed about her like clouds about the moon—
 Naked as the soul seeking love,
 As the soul that waits for death.
 White with benediction, pendulous, unfolding from the dark
 As the crystal sky of morning, she waited,
 And leaned her light above the earth of my desire.
 Like a world that spins from the hand of Infinity,
 Up from the night I leaped—
 To thee, Makhir Subatu!

.

Pearl-bright and wild, a flood without a ford,
 The River of Love flowed on.
 Her eyes were gleaming sails in a storm,
 Dipping, swooning, beckoning.
 The dawn came and trampled over her;
 Gray-arched and wide, the sanctuary of light descended.
 It was the altar where I lay;
 And I lifted my face at last, praying.
 I saw the first glow fall about her,
 Like marble pillars coming forth from the shadow.
 I raised my hands, thanking the gods
 That in love I had grown so tall
 I could touch the two lamps in heaven,
 The sun and moon hanging in the low heaven beneath her
 face.
 How great through love had I grown
 To breathe my flame into the two lamps of heaven!

.

O eyes of the eagle and the dove,
 Eyes red-starred and white-starred,
 Eyes that have too much seen, too much confessed,
 Close, close, beneath my kisses!
 Tell me no more, demand me no more—it is day.
 I see the gold-green rain of parrot-wings
 Sparkling athwart the gray and rose-gold morning.
 I go from thy closed door down the long lone road
 To the ricefields beyond the river,
 Beyond the river that has a ford.

I came to thee with hope, with desire. I have them no longer.
 Sleep, sleep; I am locked in thee.

Thus the exile lover remembers thee, Makkir Subatul

Rabindranath Tagore

FROM "GITANJALI"

I

Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger. I am uneasy at heart when I have to leave my accustomed shelter; I forgot that there abides the old in the new, and that there also thou abidest.

Through birth and death, in this world or in others, wherever thou leadest me it is thou, the same, the one companion of my endless life who ever linkest my heart with bonds of joy to the unfamiliar. When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the One in the play of the many.

II

No more noisy, loud words from me, such is my master's will.
Henceforth I deal in whispers. The speech of my heart will
be carried on in murmurings of a song.
Men hasten to the King's market. All the buyers and sellers are
there. But I have my untimely leave in the middle of the
day, in the thick of work.
Let then the flowers come out in my garden, though it is not
their time, and let the midday bees strike up their lazy hum.
Full many an hour have I spent in the strife of the good and the
evil, but now it is the pleasure of my playmate of the empty
days to draw my heart on to him, and I know not why is this
sudden call to what useless inconsequence!

III

On the day when the lotus bloomed, alas, my mind was straying,
and I knew it not. My basket was empty and the flower
remained unheeded.
Only now and again a sadness fell upon me, and I started up from
my dream and felt a sweet trace of a strange smell in the
south wind.
That vague fragrance made my heart ache with longing, and it
seemed to me that it was the eager breath of the summer
seeking for its completion.
I knew not then that it was so near, that it was mine, and this
perfect sweetness had blossomed in the depth of my own heart.

IV

By all means they try to hold me secure who love me in this world.
But it is otherwise with thy love, which is greater than theirs,
and thou keepest me free. Lest I forget them they never
venture to leave me alone. But day passes by after day and
thou art not seen.
If I call not thee in my prayers, if I keep not thee in my heart—
thy love for me still waits for my love.

V

I was not aware of the moment when I first crossed the threshold of this life. What was the power that made me open out into this vast mystery like a bud in the forest at midnight? When in the morning I looked upon the light I felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this world, that the inscrutable without name and form had taken me in its arms in the form of my own mother. Even so, in death the same unknown will appear as ever known to me. And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well. The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away to find in the very next moment its consolation in the left one.

VI

Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. Oh, thou beautiful, there in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colors and sounds and odors. There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth. And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.

But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor color, and never never a word.

FROM "THE GARDENER"

I

Over the green and yellow rice fields sweep the shadows of the autumn clouds, followed by the swift-chasing sun.

The bees forget to sip their honey; drunken with the light they foolishly hum and hover; and the ducks in the sandy river-bank clamor in joy for mere nothing.

None shall go back home, brothers, this morning, none shall go to work.

We will take the blue sky by storm and plunder the space as we run.

Laughters fly floating in the air like foams in the flood.

Brothers, we shall squander our morning in futile songs.

II

Keep me fully glad with nothing. Only take my hand in your hand.

In the gloom of the deepening night take up my heart and play with it as you list. Bind me close to you with nothing.

I will spread myself out at your feet and lie still. Under this clouded sky I will meet silence with silence. I will become one with the night clasping the earth in my breast.

Make my life glad with nothing.

The rains sweep the sky from end to end. Jasmines in the wet untamable wind revel in their own perfume. The cloud-hidden stars thrill in secret. Let me fill to the full of my heart with nothing but my own depth of joy.

III

My soul is alight with your infinitude of stars. Your world has broken upon me like a flood. The flowers of your garden blossom in my body. The joy of life that is everywhere burns like an incense in my heart. And the breath of all things plays on my life as on a pipe of reeds.

IV

Leave off your works, bride. Listen, the guest has come. Do you hear, he is gently shaking the fastening chain of the door? Let not your anklets be loud, and your steps be too hurried to meet him.

Leave off your works, bride; the guest has come, in the evening.

No, it is not the wind, bride. Do not be frightened.
It is the full-moon night of April, shadows are pale in the court-
yard, the sky overhead is bright.
Draw your veil over your face if you must, take the lamp from
your room if you fear.
No, it is not the wind, bride; do not be frightened.

Have no word with him if you are shy, stand aside by the door
when you meet him.
If he asks you questions, lower your eyes in silence, if you wish.
Do not let your bracelets jingle, when, lamp in hand, you lead
him in.
Have no word with him if you are shy.

Have you not finished your works yet, bride? Listen, the guest
has come.
Have you not lit the lamp in the cowshed?
Have you not got ready the offering basket for the evening service?
Have you not put the auspicious red mark at the parting of your
hair, and done your toilet for the night?
O bride, do you hear, the guest has come?
Have you not finished your works yet?

v

Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.
If your braiding has come loose, if the parting of your hair be not
straight, if the ribbons of your bodice be not fastened, do not
mind.
Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.

Come with quick steps over the grass.
If your feet are pale with the dew, if your anklets slacken, if
pearls drop out of your chain, do not mind.
Come with quick steps over the grass.

Do you see the clouds wrapping the sky?
Flocks of cranes fly up from the further riverbank and fitful gusts
of wind rush over the heath.
The anxious cattle run to their stalls in the village.
Do you see the clouds wrapping the sky?

In vain you light your toilet lamp; it flickers and goes out in the
wind.
Surely, who would know that with lamp-black your eyelids are
not touched? For your eyes are darker than rain clouds.
In vain you light your toilet lamp; it goes out.

Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.
If the wreath is not woven, who cares? If the wrist-chain has
not been tied, leave it by.
The sky is overcast with clouds; it is late.
Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.

VI

Lest I should know you too easily, you play with me.
You blind me with flashes of laughter to hide your tears.
I know, I know your art;
You never say the word you would.

Lest I should prize you not, you elude me in a thousand ways.
Lest I should mix you with the crowd, you stand aside.
I know, I know your art;
You never walk the path you would.

Your claim is more than others; that is why you are silent.
With a playful carelessness you avoid my gifts.
I know, I know your art;
You never accept what you would.

VII

Amidst the rush and roar of life, O beauty, carved in stone, you
stand mute and still, alone and aloof.
Great Time sits enamoured at your feet and repeats to you:
"Speak, speak to me, my love; speak, my mute bride!"
But your speech is shut up in stone, O you immovably fair!

VIII

Tell me if this is all true, my lover?
tell me if it is true.
When the eyes of me flash their lightning on you,
dark clouds in your breast make stormy answer;
Is it then true
that the dew drops fall from the night when I am seen,
and the morning light is glad when it wraps my body?
Is it true, is it true, that your love
travelled alone through ages and worlds in search of me?
that when you found me at last, your age-long desire
found utter peace in my gentle speech, and my eyes and lips
and flowing hair?
Is it then true
that the mystery of the Infinite is written on this little brow
of mine?
Tell me, my lover, if all this is true!

IX

With a glance of your eyes you could plunder all the wealth of
songs struck from poets' harps, fair woman!
But for their praises you have no ear; therefore do I come to praise
you.
You could humble at your feet the proudest heads of all the world;
But it is your loved ones, unknown to fame, whom you choose
to worship; therefore I worship you.

Your perfect arms would add glory to kingly splendor with their touch;
But you use them to sweep away the dust, and to make clean your humble home; therefore I am filled with awe.

Sara Teasdale

LEAVES

One by one, like leaves from a tree,
All my faiths have forsaken me;
But the stars above my head
Burn in white and delicate red,
And beneath my feet the earth
Brings the sturdy grass to birth.
I who was content to be
But a silken-singing tree,
But a rustle of delight
In the wistful heart of night,
I have lost the leaves that knew
Touch of rain and weight of dew.
Blinded by a leafy crown
I looked neither up nor down—
But the little leaves that die
Have left me room to see the sky;
Now for the first time I know
Stars above and earth below.

MORNING

I went out on an April morning
All alone, for my heart was high.
I was a child of the shining meadow,
I was a sister of the sky.

There in the windy flood of morning
Longing lifted its weight from me,
Lost as a sob in the midst of cheering,
Swept as a sea-bird out to sea.

THE FLIGHT

Look back with longing eyes and know that I will follow,
Lift me up in your love as a light wing lifts a swallow,
Let our flight be far in sun or windy rain—
But what if I heard my first love calling me again?

Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam,
Take me far away to the hills that hide your home;
Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door—
But what if I heard my first love calling me once more?

OVER THE ROOFS

I said, "I have shut my heart,
As one shuts an open door,
That Love may starve therein
And trouble me no more."

But over the roofs there came
The wet new wind of May,
And a tune blew up from the curb
Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun
And Love cried out in me,
"I am strong, I will break your heart
Unless you set me free."

DEBT

What do I owe to you
Who loved me deep and long?
You never gave my spirits wings
Nor gave my heart a song.

But oh, to him I loved,
Who loved me not at all,
I owe the little gate
That led through heaven's wall.

SONGS IN A HOSPITAL

THE BROKEN FIELD

My soul is a dark ploughed field
In the cold rain;
My soul is a broken field
Ploughed by pain.

Where windy grass and flowers
Were growing,
The field lies broken now
For another sowing.

Great Sower, when you tread
My field again,
Scatter the furrows there
With better grain.

OPEN WINDOWS

Out of the window a sea of green trees
Lift their soft boughs like arms of a dancer;
They beckon and call me, "Come out in the sun!"
But I cannot answer.

I am alone with Weakness and Pain,
Sick abed and June is going,
I cannot keep her, she hurries by
With the silver-green of her garments blowing.

Men and women pass in the street
Glad of the shining sapphire weather;
But we know more of it than they,
Pain and I together.

They are the runners in the sun,
Breathless and blinded by the race,
But we are watchers in the shade
Who speak with Wonder face to face.

AFTER DEATH

Now while my lips are living
Their words must stay unsaid,
And will my soul remember
To speak when I am dead?

Yet if my soul remembered
You would not heed it, dear,
For now you must not listen,
And then you could not hear.

IN MEMORIAM F. O. S.

You go a long and lovely journey,
For all the stars, like burning dew,
Are luminous and luring footprints
Of souls adventurous as you.

THE NEW POETRY

Oh, if you lived on earth elated,
How is it now that you can run
Free of the weight of flesh and faring
Far past the birthplace of the sun?

SWALLOW FLIGHT

I love my hour of wind and light,
I love men's faces and their eyes,
I love my spirit's veering flight
Like swallows under evening skies.

THE ANSWER

When I go back to earth
And all my joyous body
Puts off the red and white
That once had been so proud,
If men should pass above
With false and feeble pity,
My dust will find a voice
To answer them aloud:

"Be still, I am content,
Take back your poor compassion!—
Joy was a flame in me
Too steady to destroy.
Lithe as a bending reed
Loving the storm that sways her—
I found more joy in sorrow
Than you could find in joy."

Eunice Tietjens

THE BACCHANTE TO HER BABE

Scherzo

Come, sprite, and dance! The sun is up,
The wind runs laughing down the sky
That brims with morning like a cup.
Sprite, we must race him,
We must chase him—
You and I!
And skim across the fuzzy heather—
You and joy and I together
Whirling by!

You merry little roll of fat!—
Made warm to kiss, and smooth to pat,
And round to toy with, like a cub;
To put one's nozzle in and rub
And breathe you in like breath of kine,
Like juice of vine,
That sets my morning heart a-tingling,
Dancing, jingling,
All the glad abandon mingling
Of wind and wine!

Sprite, you are love, and you are joy,
A happiness, a dream, a toy,
A god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
The sun come down in tangled gold,
The moon to kiss, and spring to hold.

There was a time once, long ago,
Long—oh, long since . . . I scarcely know.

Almost I had forgot . . .
There was a time when you were not,
You merry sprite, save as a strain,
The strange dull pain
Of green buds swelling
In warm, straight dwelling
That must burst to the April rain.
A little heavy I was then,
And dull—and glad to rest. And when
The travail came
In searing flame . . .
But, sprite, that was so long ago!—
A century!—I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot
When you were not.

So, little sprite, come dance with me!
The sun is up, the wind is free!
Come now and trip it,
Romp and skip it,
Earth is young and so are we.
Sprite, you and I will dance together
On the heather,
Glad with all the procreant earth,
With all the fruitage of the trees,
And golden pollen on the breeze,
With plants that bring the grain to birth,
With beast and bird,
Feathered and furred,
With youth and hope and life and love,
And joy thereof—
While we are part of all, we two—
For my glad burgeoning in you!


So, merry little roll of fat,
Made warm to kiss and smooth to pat

And round to toy with, like a cub,
To put one's nozzle in and rub,
My god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
Come and dance beneath the sky,
You and I!
Look out with those round wondering eyes,
And squirm, and gurgle—and grow wise!

THE STEAM SHOVEL

Beneath my window in a city street
A monster lairs, a creature huge and grim
And only half believed: the strength of him—
Steel-strung and fit to meet
The strength of earth—
Is mighty as men's dreams that conquer force.
Steam belches from him. He is the new birth
Of old Behemoth, late-sprung from the source
Whence Grendel sprang, and all the monster clan
Dead for an age, now born again of man.

The iron head,
Set on a monstrous, jointed neck,
Glides here and there, lifts, settles on the red
Moist floor, with nose dropped in the dirt, at beck
Of some incredible control.
He snorts, and pauses couchant for a space,
Then slowly lifts, and tears the gaping hole
Yet deeper in earth's flank. A sudden race
Of loosened earth and pebbles trickles there
Like blood-drops in a wound.
But he, the monster, swings his load around—
Weightless it seems as air.
His mammoth jaw



Drops widely open with a rasping sound,
And all the red earth vomits from his maw.

O thwarted monster, born at man's decree,
A lap-dog dragon, eating from his hand
And doomed to fetch and carry at command,
Have you no longing ever to be free?
In warm, electric days to run a-muck,
Ranging like some mad dinosaur,
Your fiery heart at war
With this strange world, the city's restless ruck,
Where all drab things that toil, save you alone,
Have life;
And you the semblance only, and the strife?
Do you not yearn to rip the roots of stone
Of these great piles men build,
And hurl them down with shriek of shattered steel,
Scorning your own sure doom, so you may feel,
You too, the lust with which your fathers killed?
Or is your soul in very deed so tame,
The blood of Grendel watered to a gruel,
That you are well content
With heart of flame
Thus placidly to chew your cud of fuel
And toil in peace for man's aggrandizement?

Poor helpless creature of a half-grown god,
Blind of yourself and impotent!
At night,
When your forerunners, sprung from quicker sod,
Would range through primal woods, hot on the scent,
Or wake the stars with amorous delight,
You stand, a soiled, unwieldy mass of steel,
Black in the arc-light, modern as your name,
Dead and unsouled and trite;
Till I must feel

A quick creator's pity for your shame:
That man, who made you and who gave so much,
Yet cannot give the last transforming touch;
That with the work he cannot give the wage—
For day, no joy of night,
For toil, no ecstasy of primal rage.

THE GREAT MAN

I cannot always feel his greatness.
Sometimes he walks beside me, step by step,
And paces slowly in the ways—
The simple, wingless ways
That my thoughts tread. He gossips with me then,
And finds it good;
Not as an eagle might, his great wings folded, be content
To walk a little, knowing it his choice,
But as a simple man,
My friend.
And I forget.

Then suddenly a call floats down
From the clear airy spaces,
The great keen, lonely heights of being.
And he who was my comrade hears the call
And rises from my side, and soars,
Deep-chanting, to the heights.
Then I remember.
And my upward gaze goes with him, and I see
Far off against the sky
The glint of golden sunlight on his wings.

Ridgely Torrence

THE BIRD AND THE TREE

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong tonight.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long tonight.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door tonight.
What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score tonight.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
And that's the reason why tonight
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door—
You're out to die tonight.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face:
That's the way you'll know them there—

A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant—
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go—
For you it may be better so—
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

THE SON

Southern Ohio Market Town

I heard an old farm-wife,
Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushel at sixty cents,
It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
But the harvest early."

Charles Hanson Towne

BEYOND THE STARS

Three days I heard them grieve when I lay dead,
(It was so strange to me that they should weep!)
Tall candles burned about me in the dark,
And a great crucifix was on my breast,
And a great silence filled the lonesome room.

I heard one whisper, "Lo! the dawn is breaking,
And he has lost the wonder of the day."
Another came whom I had loved on earth,
And kissed my brow and brushed my dampened hair.
Softly she spoke: "Oh, that he should not see
The April that his spirit bathed in! Birds
Are singing in the orchard, and the grass
That soon will cover him is growing green.
The daisies whiten on the emerald hills,
And the immortal magic that he loved
Wakens again—and he has fallen asleep."
Another said: "Last night I saw the moon
Like a tremendous lantern shine in heaven,
And I could only think of him—and sob.
For I remembered evenings wonderful
When he was faint with Life's sad loveliness,
And watched the silver ribbons wandering far
Along the shore, and out upon the sea.
Oh, I remembered how he loved the world,
The sighing ocean and the flaming stars,
The everlasting glamour God has given—
His tapestries that wrap the earth's wide room.
I minded me of mornings filled with rain
When he would sit and listen to the sound
As if it were lost music from the spheres.

He loved the crocus and the hawthorn-hedge,
He loved the shining gold of buttercups,
And the low droning of the drowsy bees
That boomed across the meadows. He was glad
At dawn or sundown; glad when Autumn came
With her worn livery and scarlet crown,
And glad when Winter rocked the earth to rest.
Strange that he sleeps today when Life is young,
And the wild banners of the Spring are blowing
With green inscriptions of the old delight."

I heard them whisper in the quiet room.
I longed to open then my sealed eyes,
And tell them of the glory that was mine.
There was no darkness where my spirit flew,
There was no night beyond the teeming world.
Their April was like winter where I roamed;
Their flowers were like stones where now I fared.
Earth's day! it was as if I had not known
What sunlight meant! . . . Yea, even as they grieved
For all that I had lost in their pale place,
I swung beyond the borders of the sky,
And floated through the clouds, myself the air,
Myself the ether, yet a matchless being
Whom God had snatched from penury and pain
To draw across the barricades of heaven.
I clomb beyond the sun, beyond the moon;
In flight on flight I touched the highest star;
I plunged to regions where the Spring is born,
Myself (I asked not how) the April wind,
Myself the elements that are of God.
Up flowery stairways of eternity
I whirled in wonder and untrammelled joy,
An atom, yet a portion of His dream—
His dream that knows no end. . . .

I was the rain,

I was the dawn, I was the purple east,
I was the moonlight on enchanted nights,
(Yet time was lost to me); I was a flower
For one to pluck who loved me; I was bliss,
And rapture, splendid moments of delight;
And I was prayer, and solitude, and hope;
And always, always, always I was love.
I tore asunder flimsy doors of time,
And through the windows of my soul's new sight
I saw beyond the ultimate bounds of space.
I was all things that I had loved on earth—
The very moonbeam in that quiet room,
The very sunlight one had dreamed I lost,
The soul of the returning April grass,
The spirit of the evening and the dawn,
The perfume in unnumbered hawthorn-blooms.
There was no shadow on my perfect peace,
No knowledge that was hidden from my heart.
I learned what music meant; I read the years;
I found where rainbows hide, where tears begin;
I trod the precincts of things yet unborn.

Yea, while I found all wisdom (being dead),
They grieved for me . . . I should have grieved for them!

Louis Untermeyer

LANDSCAPES

The rain was over, and the brilliant air
Made every little blade of grass appear
Vivid and startling—everything was there
With sharpened outlines, eloquently clear,
As though one saw it in a crystal sphere.

The rusty sumac with its struggling spires;
The golden-rod with all its million fires
(A million torches swinging in the wind);
A single poplar, marvellously thinned,
Half like a naked boy, half like a sword;
Clouds, like the haughty banners of the Lord;
A group of pansies with their shrewish faces,
Little old ladies cackling over laces;
The quaint, unhurried road that curved so well;
The prim petunias with their rich, rank smell;
The lettuce-birds, the creepers in the field—
How bountifully were they all revealed!
How arrogantly each one seemed to thrive—
So frank and strong, so radiantly alive!

And over all the morning-minded earth
There seemed to spread a sharp and kindling mirth,
Piercing the stubborn stones until I saw
The toad face heaven without shame or awe,
The ant confront the stars, and every weed
Grow proud as though it bore a royal seed;
While all the things that die and decompose
Sent forth their bloom as richly as the rose. . . .
Oh, what a liberal power that made them thrive
And keep the very dirt that died, alive.

And now I saw the slender willow-tree
No longer calm or drooping listlessly,
Letting its languid branches sway and fall
As though it danced in some sad ritual;
But rather like a young, athletic girl,
Fearless and gay, her hair all out of curl,
And flying in the wind—her head thrown back,
Her arms flung up, her garments flowing slack,
And all her rushing spirits running over. . . .
What made a sober tree seem such a rover—

Or made the staid and stalwart apple-trees,
 That stood for years knee-deep in velvet peace,
 Turn all their fruit to little worlds of flame,
 And burn the trembling orchard there below?
 What lit the heart of every golden-glow—
 Oh, why was nothing weary, dull, or tame? . . .
 Beauty it was, and keen, compassionate mirth
 That drives the vast and energetic earth.

And, with abrupt and visionary eyes,
 I saw the huddled tenements arise.
 Here where the merry clover danced and shone
 Sprang agonies of iron and of stone;
 There, where green Silence laughed or stood enthralled,
 Cheap music blared and evil alleys sprawled.
 The roaring avenues, the shrieking mills;
 Brothels and prisons on those kindly hills—
 The menace of these things swept over me;
 A threatening, unconquerable sea. . . .

A stirring landscape and a generous earth!
 Freshening courage and benevolent mirth—
 And then the city, like a hideous sore. . . .
 Good God, and what is all this beauty for?

“FEUERZAUBER”

I never knew the earth had so much gold—
 The fields run over with it, and this hill
 Hoary and old,
 Is young with buoyant blooms that flame and thrill.

Such golden fires, such yellow—lo, how good
 This spendthrift world, and what a lavish God—
 This fringe of wood,
 Blazing with buttercup and goldenrod.

You too, beloved, are changed. Again I see
Your face grow mystical, as on that night
You turned to me,
And all the trembling world—and you—were white.

Aye, you are touched; your singing lips grow dumb;
The fields absorb you, color you entire. . . .
And you become
A goddess standing in a world of fire!

ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Jerome Epstein—August 8, 1912

Lo—to the battle-ground of life,
Child, you have come, like a conquering shout,
Out of a struggle—into strife;
Out of a darkness—into doubt.

Girt with the fragile armor of youth,
Child, you must ride into endless wars,
With the sword of protest, the buckler of truth,
And a banner of love to sweep the stars.

About you the world's despair will surge;
Into defeat you must plunge and grope—
Be to the faltering an urge;
Be to the hopeless years a hope!

Be to the darkened world a flame;
Be to its unconcern a blow—
For out of its pain and tumult you came,
And into its tumult and pain you go.

IRONY

Why are the things that have no death
 The ones with neither sight nor breath!
 Eternity is thrust upon
 A bit of earth, a senseless stone.
 A grain of dust, a casual clod
 Receives the greatest gift of God.
 A pebble in the roadway lies—
 It never dies.

The grass our fathers cut away
 Is growing on their graves to-day;
 The tiniest brooks that scarcely flow
 Eternally will come and go.
 There is no kind of death to kill
 The sands that lie so meek and still. . . .
 But Man is great and strong and wise—
 And so he dies.

Allen Upward

SCENTED LEAVES FROM A CHINESE JAR

THE ACACIA LEAVES

The aged man, when he beheld winter approaching, counted
 the leaves as they lapsed from the acacia trees; while his son was
 talking of the spring.

THE BITTER PURPLE WILLOWS

Meditating on the glory of illustrious lineage I lifted up my eyes
 and beheld the bitter purple willows growing round the tombs of
 the exalted Mings.

THE CORAL FISHER

The coral fisher, who had been a long time beneath the water, rose to the surface with nothing in his hand but a spray of crimson seaweed. In answer to the master of the junk he said, "While I was in the world of fishes this miserable weed appeared to me more beautiful than coral."

THE DIAMOND

The poet Wong, after he had delighted a company of mandarins at a feast, sat silent in the midst of his household. He explained, "The diamond sparkles only when it is in the light."

THE ESTUARY

Some one complained to the Master, "After many lessons I do not fully understand your doctrine." In response the Master pointed to the tide in the mouth of the river, and asked, "How wide is the sea in this place?"

THE INTOXICATED POET

A poet, having taken the bridle off his tongue, spoke thus: "More fragrant than the heliotrope, which blooms all the year round, better than vermilion letters on tablets of sendal, are thy kisses, thou shy one!"

THE JONQUILS

I have heard that a certain princess, when she found that she had been married by a demon, wove a wreath of jonquils and sent it to the lover of former days.

THE MARIGOLD

Even as the seed of the marigold, carried by the wind, lodges on the roofs of palaces, and lights the air with flame-colored blossoms, so may the child-like words of the insignificant poet confer honor on lofty and disdainful mandarins.

THE MERMAID

The sailor boy who leant over the side of the Junk of Many Pearls, and combed the green tresses of the sea with his ivory fingers, believing that he had heard the voice of a mermaid, cast his body down between the waves.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The emperors of fourteen dynasties, clad in robes of yellow silk embroidered with the Dragon, wearing gold diadems set with pearls and rubies, and seated on thrones of incomparable ivory, have ruled over the Middle Kingdom for four thousand years.

THE MILKY WAY

My mother taught me that every night a procession of junks carrying lanterns moves silently across the sky, and the water sprinkled from their paddles falls to the earth in the form of dew. I no longer believe that the stars are junks carrying lanterns, no longer that the dew is shaken from their oars.

THE ONION

The child who threw away leaf after leaf of the many-coated onion, to get to the sweet heart, found in the end that he had thrown away the heart itself.

THE SEA-SHELL

To the passionate lover, whose sighs come back to him on every breeze, all the world is like a murmuring sea-shell.

THE STUPID KITE

A kite, while devouring a skylark, complained, "Had I known that thy flesh was no sweeter than that of a sparrow I should have listened longer to thy delicious notes."

THE WINDMILL

The exquisite painter Ko-tsu was often reproached by an industrious friend for his fits of idleness. At last he excused himself by saying, "You are a watermill—a windmill can grind only when the wind blows."

THE WORD

The first time the emperor Han heard a certain Word he said, "It is strange." The second time he said, "It is divine." The third time he said, "Let the speaker be put to death."

John Hall Wheelock

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
Over the huddled rows of stone and brick
A few sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
There is no sound around the world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
When this same moment made all mysteries clear—
The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
So tawdry and so dear!

SPRING

The air is full of dawn and **spring**;
Outside the room I see
A swallow, like a shaft of light,
Shift sideways suddenly.

There is no room for death at all
In earth or heaven above;
He never yet believed in death
Who ever learned to love.

Build me a tomb when I am dead,
But leave a window free
That I may watch the swallow's flight,
And spring come back to me.

Build me a tomb of steel and stone,
But leave one window free,
That I may feel the spring come back—
And you come back to me!

LIKE MUSIC

Your body's motion is like music;
Her stride ecstatic and bright
Moves to the rhythm of dumb music,
The unheard music of delight.

The silent splendor of the creation
Speaks through your body's stately strength,
And the lithe harmony of beauty
Undulates through its lovely length.

And rhythmically your bosom's arches,
Alternately, with every breath
Lift lifeward in long lines of beauty
And lapse along the slopes of death.

THE THUNDER-SHOWER

The lightning flashed, and lifted
The lids of heaven apart,
The fiery thunder rolled you
All night long through my heart.

From dreams of you at dawn
I rose to the window ledge:
The storm had passed away,
The lake lapped on the sedge.

The lyre of heaven trembled
Still with the thought of you,
The twilight on the waters,
And all my spirit, too.

SONG

All my love for my sweet
I bared one day to her.
Carelessly she took it,
And like a conqueror
She bowed the neck of my soul
To fit it to her yoke,
And bridled the lips of Song—
Fear within me awoke!
But Love cried: "Swiftly, swiftly
Bear her along the road;
Beautiful is the goal
And Beauty is the goad."

ALONE

Ah, never in all my life
Have I ever fled away
From the loneliness that follows
My spirit night and day!

Though I fly to the dearest face,
It follows without rest—
To the kind heart of love,
And the beloved breast.

Though I walk amid the crowd,
Still I walk apart;
Alone, alone I lie
Even at the loved one's heart.

NIRVANA

Sleep on—I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Over the stars that murmur as they go
Lighting your lattice-window far below.
And every star some of the glory spells
Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you, long long ago;
Like the sweet, silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
Sleep on—I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

TRIUMPH OF THE SINGER

I shake my hair in the wind of morning
For the joy within me that knows no bounds.
I echo backward the vibrant beauty
Wherewith heaven's hollow lute resounds.

I shed my song on the feet of all men,
 On the feet of all shed out like wine;
 On the whole and the hurt I shed my bounty,
 The beauty within me that is not mine.

Turn not away from my song, nor scorn me,
 Who bear the secret that holds the sky
 And the stars together; but know within me
 There speaks another more wise than I.

Nor spurn me here from your heart to hate me,
 Yet hate me here if you will. Not so
 Myself you hate, but the love within me
 That loves you whether you would or no.

Here love returns with love to the lover
 And beauty unto the heart thereof,
 And hatred unto the heart of the hater,
 Whether he would or no, with love!

Hervey White

LAST NIGHT

Last night the full moon laid a cloth of white
 Within my window, spread upon my bed,
 And, with her old-time splendor, asked of me
 To share her harvest supper. I arose,
 And stepped without to pay my greetings. When,
 Behold!
 The old world flowered again, as it had done
 When I was twenty, at the gate of life;
 The meadows held untouched their virgin bloom,
 The darkling trees with gleaming leaves flashed bright,

Dewy and pendant till the waiting morn;
The shadows lay like cool soft soothing hands
Upon the pastures pulsing with sweet June:
I, too, was young again, and God was just,
And through my blood propelled great future acts—
Big things to do, and thoughts, and voice to speak—
So potent was the charm of my white queen.
It was not till I walked for many miles,
And came back weary to my quiet room,
That I had once more taken back my years,
My cares, my listlessness, and stagnant grief.
And, even as I sit in full faced day,
My memory faintly shadows out this song.

I SAW THE CLOUDS

I saw the clouds among the hills
Trailing their plumes of rainy gray.
The purple of the woods behind
Fell down to where the valley lay
In sweet satiety of rain,
With ripened fruit, and full filled grain.

I saw the graves, upon the plain,
Of pioneers, who took the land,
And tamed the stubborn elements
Till they were gentle to the hand.
Their children, now in fortune's ways,
Dwell in their father's palaces.

I saw some old forgotten lays;
And treasured volumes I passed by.
They were but repetitions cheap
For any hucksterer to buy.
The clouds, the graves, the worn old song,
I bear them in my heart along.

Margaret Widdemer

THE BEGGARS

The little pitiful, worn, laughing faces,
Begging of Life for Joy!

I saw the little daughters of the poor,
Tense from the long day's working, strident, gay,
Hurrying to the picture-place. There curled
A hideous flushed beggar at the door,
Trading upon his horror, eyeless, maimed,
Complacent in his profitable mask.
They mocked his horror, but they gave to him
From the brief wealth of pay-night, and went in
To the cheap laughter and the tawdry thoughts
Thrown on the screen; in to the seeking hand
Covered by darkness, to the luring voice
Of Horror, boy-masked, whispering of rings,
Of silks, of feathers, bought—so cheap!—with just
Their slender starved child-bodies, palpitant
For beauty, laughter, passion—that is life:
(A frock of satin for an hour's shame,
A coat of fur for two days' servitude;
"And the clothes last," the thought runs on, within
The poor warped girl-minds drugged with changeless days;
"Who cares or knows after the hour is done?")
—Poor little beggars at Life's door for Joy!

The old man crouched there, eyeless, horrible,
Complacent in the marketable mask
That earned his comforts—and they gave to him!

But ah, the little painted, wistful faces
Questioning Life for Joy!

TERESINA'S FACE

He saw it last of all before they herded in the steerage,
 Dark against the sunset where he lingered by the hold,
 The tear-stained dusk-rose face of her, the little Teresina,
 Sailing out to lands of gold:

Ah, the days were long, long days, still toiling in the vineyard,
 Working for the coins that set him free to go to her,
 Where gay it glowed, the flower face of little Teresina,
 Where the joy and riches were:

Hard to find one rose-face where the dark rose-faces cluster,
 Where the outland laws are strange and outland voices hum,
 (Only one lad's hoping, and the word of Teresina,
 Who would wait for him to come!)

.

God grant he may not find her, since he might not win her freedom,
 Nor yet be great enough to love, in such marred, captive wise,
 The patient, painted face of her, the little Teresina,
 With its cowed, all-knowing eyes!

GREEK FOLK SONG

Under dusky laurel leaf,
 Scarlet leaf of rose,
 I lie prone, who have known
 All a woman knows.

Love and grief and motherhood,
 Fame and mirth and scorn—
 These are all shall befall
 Any woman born.

Jewel-laden are my hands,
Tall my stone above—
Do not weep that I sleep,
Who was wise in love.

Where I walk, a shadow gray
Through gray asphodel,
I am glad, who have had
All that life can tell.

Florence Wilkinson

OUR LADY OF IDLENESS

They in the darkness gather and ask
Her name, the mistress of their endless task.

The Toilers

Tinsel-makers in factory gloom,
Miners in ethylene pits,
Divers and druggists mixing poisonous bloom;

Huge hunters, men of brawn,
Half-naked creatures of the tropics,
Furred trappers stealing forth at Labrador dawn;

Catchers of beetles, sheep-men in bleak sheds,
Pearl-fishers perched on Indian coasts,
Children in stifling towers pulling threads;

Dark bunchy women pricking intricate laces,
Myopic jewelers' apprentices,
Arabs who chase the long-legged birds in sandy places:

They are her invisible slaves,
 The genii of her costly wishes,
 Climbing, descending, running under waves.

They strip earth's dimmest cell,
 They burn and drown and stifle
 To build her inconceivable and fragile shell.

The Artist-Artisans

They have painted a miracle-shawl
 Of cobwebs and whispering shadows,
 And trellised leaves that ripple on a wall.

They have broidered a tissue of cost,
 Spun foam of the sea
 And liliated imagery of the vanishing frost.

Her floating skirts have run
 Like iridescent marshes,
 Or like the tossed hair of a stormy sun.

Her silver cloak has shone
 Blue as a mummy's beads,
 Green as the ice-glints of an Arctic zone.

.

She is weary and has lain
 At last her body down.
 What, with her clothing's beauty, they have slain!

The Angel With the Sword

Come, brothers, let us lift
 Her pitiful body on high,
 Her tight-shut hands that take to heaven no gift

But ashes of costly things.
We seven archangels will
Bear her in silence on our flame-tipped wings.

The Toilers

Lo, she is thinner than fire
On a burned mill-town's edge,
And smaller than a young child's dead desire.

Yea, emptier than the wage
Of a spent harlot crying for her beauty,
And grayer than the mumbling lips of age.

A Lost Girl

White as a drowned one's feet
Twined with the wet sea-bracken,
And naked as a Sin driven from God's littlest street.

STUDENTS

John Brown and Jeanne at Fontainebleau—
'Twas Toussaint, just a year ago;
Crimson and copper was the glow
Of all the woods at Fontainebleau.
They peered into that ancient well,
And watched the slow torch as it fell.
John gave the keeper two whole sous,
And Jeanne that smile with which she woos
John Brown to folly. So they lose
The Paris train. But never mind!—
All-Saints are rustling in the wind,
And there's an inn, a crackling fire—
(It's *deux-cinquante*, but Jeanne's desire);
There's dinner, candles, country wine,
Jeanne's lips—philosophy divine!

THE NEW POETRY

They are her invisible slaves,
The genii of her costly wishes,
Climbing, descending, running under waves.

They strip earth's dimmest cell,
They burn and drown and stifle
To build her inconceivable and fragile shell.

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The Angel With the Sword

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Her pitiful body on high,
Her tight-shut hands that take to h

There was a bosquet at Saint Cloud
Wherein John's picture of her grew
To be a Salon masterpiece—
Till the rain fell that would not cease.
Through one long alley how they raced!—
'Twas gold and brown, and all a waste
Of matted leaves, moss-interlaced.
Shades of mad queens and hunter-kings
And thorn-sharp feet of dryad-things
Were company to their wanderings;
Then rain and darkness on them drew.
The rich folks' motors honked and flew.
They hailed an old cab, heaven for two;
The bright Champs-Élysées at last—
Though the cab crawled it sped too fast.

Paris, upspringing white and gold:
Flamboyant arch and high-enscrolled
War-sculpture, big, Napoleonic—
Fierce chargers, angels histrionic;
The royal sweep of gardened spaces,
The pomp and whirl of columned Places;
The *Rive Gauche*, age-old, gay and gray;
The *impasse* and the loved café;
The tempting tidy little shops;
The convent walls, the glimpsed tree-tops;
Book-stalls, old men like dwarfs in plays;
Talk, work, and Latin Quarter ways.

May—Robinson's, the chestnut trees—
Were ever crowds as gay as these?
The quick pale waiters on a run,
The round green tables, one by one,
Hidden away in amorous bowers—
Lilac, laburnum's golden showers.
Kiss, clink of glasses, laughter heard,

And nightingales quite undeterred.
And then that last extravagance—
O Jeanne, a single amber glance
Will pay him!—"Let's play millionaire
For just two hours—on princely fare,
At some hotel where lovers dine
À deux and pledge across the wine!"
They find a damask breakfast-room,
Where stiff silk roses range their bloom.
The garçon has a splendid way
Of bearing in *grand déjeuner*.
Then to be left alone, alone,
High up above Rue Castiglione;
Curtained away from all the rude
Rumors, in silken solitude;
And, John, her head upon your knees—
Time waits for moments such as these.

Marguerite Wilkinson

A WOMAN'S BELOVED

A Psalm

To what shall a woman liken her beloved,
And with what shall she compare him to do him honor?
He is like the close-folded new leaves of the woodbine, odorless,
but sweet,
Flushed with a new and swiftly rising life,
Strong to grow and give glad shade in summer.
Even thus should a woman's beloved shelter her in time of anguish.

And he is like the young robin, eager to try his wings,
For within soft-stirring wings of the spirit has she cherished him,
And with the love of the mother bird shall she embolden him, that
his flight may avail.

A woman's beloved is to her as the roots of the willow,
Long, strong, white roots, bedded lovingly in the dark.
Into the depths of her have gone the roots of his strength and of
his pride,
That she may nourish him well and become his fulfilment.
None may tear him from the broad fields where he is planted!

A woman's beloved is like the sun rising upon the waters, making
the dark places light,
And like the morning melody of the pine trees.
Truly, she thinks the roses die joyously
If they are crushed beneath his feet.
A woman's beloved is to her a great void that she may illumine,
A great king that she may crown, a great soul that she may redeem.
And he is also the perfecting of life,
Flowers for the altar, bread for the lips, wine for the chalice.

You that have known passion, think not that you have fathomed
love.
It may be that you have never seen love's face.
For love thrusts aside storm-clouds of passion to unveil the
heavens,
And, in the heart of a woman, only then is love born.

To what shall I liken a woman's beloved,
And with what shall I compare him to do him honor?
He is a flower, a song, a struggle, a wild storm,
And, at the last, he is redemption, power, joy, fulfilment and
perfect peace.

AN INCANTATION

O great sun of heaven, harm not my love;
Sear him not with your flame, blind him not with your beauty,
Shine for his pleasure!

O gray rains of heaven, harm not my love;
Drown not in your torrent the song of his heart,
Lave and caress him.

O swift winds of heaven, harm not my love;
Bruise not nor buffet him with your rough humor,
Sing you his prowess!

O mighty triad, strong ones of heaven,
Sun, rain, and wind, be gentle, I charge you—
For your mad mood of wrath have me—I am ready—
But spare him, my lover, most proud and most dear,
O sun, rain and wind, strong ones of heaven!

William Carlos Williams

SICILIAN EMIGRANT'S SONG

In New York Harbor

O—eh—lee! La—la!
Donna! Donna!
Blue is the sky of Palermo;
Blue is the little bay;
And dost thou remember the orange and fig,
The lively sun and the sea breeze at evening?
Hey—la!
Donna! Donna! Maria!

O—eh—li! La—la!
Donna! Donna!
Gray is the sky of this land.
Gray and green is the water.

I see no trees, dost thou? The wind
Is cold for the big woman there with the candle.

Hey—la!

Donna! Donna! Maria!

O—ch—li! O—la!

Donna! Donna!

I sang thee by the blue waters;
I sing thee here in the gray dawning.
Kiss, for I put down my guitar;
I'll sing thee more songs after the landing.
O Jesu, I love thee!
Donna! Donna! Maria!

PEACE ON EARTH

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Bears are abroad!
The Eagle is screaming!
Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining;
Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!

Gold against blue
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.


THE SHADOW

Soft as the bed in the earth
Where a stone has lain—
So soft, so smooth and so cool,
Spring closes me in
With her arms and her hands.

Rich as the smell
Of new earth on a stone,
That has lain, breathing
The damp through its pores—
Spring closes me in
With her blossomy hair;
Brings dark to my eyes.

METRIC FIGURE

There is a bird in the poplars—
It is the sun!
The leaves are little yellow fish
Swimming in the river;
The bird skims above them—
Day is on his wings.
Phoenix!
It is he that is making
The great gleam among the poplars.
It is his singing
Outshines the noise
Of leaves clashing in the wind.



SUB TERRA

Where shall I find you—
You, my grotesque fellows
That I seek everywhere
To make up my band?
None, not one
With the earthy tastes I require:
The burrowing pride that rises
Subtly as on a bush in May.

Where are you this day—
You, my seven-year locusts
With cased wings?
Ah, my beauties, how I long!
That harvest
That shall be your advent—
Thrusting up through the grass,
Up under the weeds,
Answering me—
That shall be satisfying!
The light shall leap and snap
That day as with a million lashes!

Oh, I have you!
Yes, you are about me in a sense,
Playing under the blue pools
That are my windows.
But they shut you out still
There in the half light—
For the simple truth is
That though I see you clear enough . . .
You are not there.

It is not that—it is you,
You I want, my companions!

God! if I could only fathom
The guts of shadows!—
You to come with me
Poking into negro houses
With their gloom and smell!
In among children
Leaping around a dead dog!
Mimicking
Onto the lawns of the rich!
You!
To go with me a-tip-toe
Head down under heaven,
Nostrils lipping the wind!

SLOW MOVEMENT

All those treasures that lie in the little bolted box whose tiny
space is
Mightier than the room of the stars, being secret and filled with
dreams:
All those treasures—I hold them in my hand—are straining con-
tinually
Against the sides and the lid and the two ends of the little box in
which I guard them;
Crying that there is no sun come among them this great while
and that they weary of shining;
Calling me to fold back the lid of the little box and to give them
sleep finally.

But the night I am hiding from them, dear friend, is far more
desperate than their night!
And so I take pity on them and pretend to have lost the key to
the little house of my treasures;
For they would die of weariness were I to open it, and not be
merely faint and sleepy
As they are now.

POSTLUDE

Now that I have cooled to you
Let there be gold of tarnished masonry,
Temples soothed by the sun to ruin
That sleep utterly.
Give me hand for the dances,
Ripples at Philae, in and out,
And lips, my Lesbian,
Wall flowers that once were flame.

Your hair is my Carthage
And my arms the bow,
And our words arrows
To shoot the stars
Who from that misty sea
Swarm to destroy us.

But you there beside me—
Oh, how shall I defy you,
Who wound me in the night
With breasts shining
Like Venus and like Mars?
The night that is shouting Jason
When the loud eaves rattle
As with waves above me
Blue at the prow of my desire.

Charles Erskine Scott Wood

THE POET IN THE DESERT

Extracts from the Prologue

I have come into the Desert because my soul is athirst as the
 Desert is athirst;
 My soul which is the soul of all; universal, not different.
 We are athirst for the waters which make beautiful the path
 And entice the grass, the willows and poplars,
 So that in the heat of the day we may lie in a cool shadow,
 Soothed as by the hands of quiet women, listening to the discourse
 of running waters as the voices of women, exchanging the
 confidences of love.

.

The mountains afar girdle the Desert as a zone of amethyst;
 Pale, translucent walls of opal,
 Girdling the Desert as Life is girt by Eternity.
 They lift their heads high above our tribulation
 Into the azure vault of Time;
 Theirs are the airy castles which are set upon foundations of
 sapphire.
 My soul goes out to them as the bird to her secret nest.
 They are the abode of peace.

.

The flowers bloom in the Desert joyously—
 They do not weary themselves with questioning;
 They are careless whether they be seen, or praised.
 They blossom unto life perfectly and unto death perfectly, leaving
 nothing unsaid.
 They spread a voluptuous carpet for the feet of the Wind
 And to the frolic Breezes which overleap them, they whisper:
 "Stay a moment, Brother; plunder us of our passion;
 Our day is short, but our beauty is eternal."

Never have I found a place, or a season, without beauty.
Neither the sea, where the white stallions champ their bits and
 rear against their bridles,
Nor the Desert, bride of the Sun, which sits scornful, apart,
Like an unwooded princess, careless, indifferent.
She spreads her garments, wonderful beyond estimation,
And embroiders continually her mantle.
She is a queen, seated on a throne of gold
In the Hall of Silence.
She insists upon humility.
She insists upon meditation.
She insists that the soul be free.
She requires an answer.
She demands the final reply to thoughts which cannot be answered.
She lights the sun for a torch
And sets up the great cliffs as sentinels:
The morning and the evening are curtains before her chambers.
She displays the stars as her coronet.
She is cruel and invites victims,
Restlessly moving her wrists and ankles,
Which are loaded with sapphires.
Her brown breasts flash with opals.
She slays those who fear her,
But runs her hand lovingly over the brow of those who know her,
Soothing with a voluptuous caress.
She is a courtesan, wearing jewels,
Enticing, smiling a bold smile;
Adjusting her brilliant raiment negligently,
Lying brooding upon her floor which is richly carpeted;
Her brown thighs beautiful and naked.
She toys with the dazzle of her diadems,
Smiling inscrutably.
She is a nun, withdrawing behind her veil;
Gray, subdued, silent, mysterious, meditative; unapproachable.
She is fair as a goddess sitting beneath a flowering peach-tree, be-
 side a clear river.

Her body is tawny with the eagerness of the Sun
And her eyes are like pools which shine in deep cañons.
She is beautiful as a swart woman, with opals at her throat,
Rubies on her wrists and topaz about her ankles.
Her breasts are like the evening and the day stars;
She sits upon her throne of light, proud and silent, indifferent to
her wooers.
The Sun is her servitor, the Stars are her attendants, running
before her.
She sings a song unto her own ears, solitary, but it is sufficient—
It is the song of her being. Oh, if I may sing the song of my being
it will be sufficient.
She is like a jeweled dancer, dancing upon a pavement of gold;
Dazzling, so that the eyes must be shaded.
She wears the stars upon her bosom and braids her hair with the
constellations.

I know the Desert is beautiful, for I have lain in her arms and she
has kissed me.
I have come to her, that I may know freedom;
That I may lie upon the breast of the Mother and breathe the air
of primal conditions.
I have come out from the haunts of men;
From the struggle of wolves upon a carcass,
To be melted in Creation's crucible and be made clean;
To know that the law of Nature is freedom.

Edith Wyatt

ON THE GREAT PLATEAU

In the Santa Clara Valley, far away and far away,
Cool-breathed waters dip and dally, linger towards another day—
Far and far away—far away.

Slow their floating step, but tireless, terraced down the great
Plateau.

Towards our ways of steam and wireless, silver-paced the brook-
beds go.

Past the ladder-walled Pueblos, past the orchards, pear and quince,
Where the back-locked river's ebb flows, miles and miles the valley
glints,

Shining backwards, singing downwards, towards horizons blue
and bay.

All the roofs the roads ensconce so dream of visions far away—
Santa Cruz and Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Santa Fé.

Ancient, sacred fears and faiths, ancient, sacred faiths and fears—
Some were real, some were wraiths—Indian, Franciscan years,
Built the Khivas, swung the bells; while the wind sang plain and
free,

"Turn your eyes from visioned hells!—look as far as you can see!"

In the Santa Clara Valley, far away and far away,
Dying dreams divide and dally, crystal-terraced waters sally—
Linger towards another day, far and far away—far away.

As you follow where you find them, up along the high Plateau,
In the hollows left behind them Spanish chapels fade below—
Shaded court and low corrals. In the vale the goat-herd browses.
Hollyhocks are seneschals by the little buff-walled houses.

Over grassy swale and alley have you ever seen it so—

Up the Santa Clara Valley, riding on the Great Plateau?

Past the ladder-walled Pueblos, past the orchards, pear and quince,
Where the trenchèd waters' ebb flows, miles and miles the valley
glints,

Shining backwards, singing downwards towards horizons blue and
bay.

All the haunts the bluffs ensconce so breathe of visions far away,

As you ride near Ildefonso back again to Santa Fé.

Pecos, mellow with the years, tall-walled Taos—who can know
Half the storied faiths and fears haunting green New Mexico?

Only from her open places down arroyos blue and bay,

One wild grace of many graces dallies towards another day.
Where her yellow tufa crumbles, something stars and **grasses** know,
Something true, that crowns and humbles, shimmers from the
Great Plateau:

Blows where cool-paced waters dally from the stillness of Puyé,
Down the Santa Clara Valley through the world from far away—
Far and far away—far away.

SUMMER HAIL

Once the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down a stabled floor,
Down the thunders, something galloped far and wide,
Glancing far and fleet
Down the silver street—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.

Pitty patty polt—

Shoe the wild colt!

Here a nail! There a nail!

Pitty patty polt!

Good and badness, die away.
Strength and swiftness down the day,
Dapple happy down my glancing silver street!
Oh, the touch of summer cold!—
Beauty swinging quick and bold,
Dipping, dappling where the distant roof-tops meet!

Pitty patty polt—

Shoe the wild colt!

Listen, dusty care:
Through a magic air,
Once I watched the way of perfect splendor ride,
Swishing far and gray,
Buoyant and gay—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.

Good and badness, go your ways,
 Vanish far and fleet.
 Strength and swiftness run my days,
 Down my silver street.
 Little care, forevermore
 Be you lesser than before.
 Mighty frozen rain,
 Come! oh, come again!
 Let the heavens' door be rended
 With the touch of summer cold—
 Dappling hoof-beats clatter splendid,
 Infinitely gay and bold!

*Pitty patty polt—
 Shoe the wild colt!
 Here a nail and there a nail!
 Pitty patty polt!*

Once the heavens' gabled door
 Opened: down the stabled floor,
 Down the thunders something galloped wide and far;
 Something dappled far and fleet,
 Glancing down my silver street,
 And I saw the ways of life just as they are.

*Pitty patty polt—
 Shoe the wild colt!
 Here a nail! There a nail!
 Pitty patty polt!*


TO F. W.

You are my companion
 Down the silver road,
 Still and many-changing,
 Infinitely changing.
 You are my companion.

Something sings in lives—
Days of walking on and on,
Deep beyond all singing,
Wonderful past singing.

Wonderful our road,
Long and many-changing,
Infinitely changing.
This, more wonderful—
We are here together,
You and I together,
I am your companion;
You are my companion,
My own, true companion.

Let the road-side fade:
Morning on the mountain-top,
Hours along the valley,
Days of walking on and on,
Pulse away in silence,
In eternal silence.
Let the world all fade,
Break and pass away.
Yet will this remain,
Deep beyond all singing,
My own true companion,
Beautiful past singing:
We were here together—
On this earth together;
I was your companion,
You were my companion,
My own true companion.



A CITY AFTERNOON

Green afternoon serene and bright, along my street you sail away
Sun-dappled like a ship of light that glints upon a rippled
bay.

Afar, freight-engines call and toll; the sprays flash on the fragrant
grass;

The children and the nurses stroll; the charging motors plunge
and pass.

Invisibly the shadows grow, empurpling in a rising tide
The walks where light-gowned women go, white curb, gray asphalt
iris-dyed.

A jolting trolley shrills afar; nasturtiums blow, and ivy vines;
Wet scents of turf and black-smoothed tar float down the roof-
trees' vergent lines.

Where will you go, my afternoon, that glints so still and swift
away,

Blue-shaded like a ship of light bound outward from a wimpled
bay?

Oh—thrilling, pulsing, dark and bright, shall you, your work,
your pain, your mirth,

Fly into the immortal night and silence of our mother earth?
She bore all Eden's green and dew, and Persia's scented wine and
rose,

And, flowering white against the blue, acanthus leaf and marbled
pose.

And deep the Maenad's choric dance, Crusader's cross, and heathen
crest

Lie sunk with rose and song and lance all veiled and vanished in
her breast.

And all those afternoons once danced and sparkled in the sapphire
light

And iris shade as you have glanced, green afternoon, in vibrant
flight.

As, down dim vistas, echoing, dead afternoons entreat our days,
What breath of beauty will you sing to souls unseen and unknown
ways?

How close and how unanswering, green afternoon, you pulse away,
So little and so great a thing—deep towards the bourne of every
day.

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